United Nations A/C.4/54/SR.13

General Assembly
Fifty-fourth session
Official Records

Distr.: General
14 December 1999
English
Original: French

Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

Summary record of the 13th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 21 October 1999, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Zackheos ..... (Cyprus)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 90: Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects (*continued*) (A/54/87 and A/54/63-S/1999/171; A/C.4/54/L.2*)

1. **Mr. Bozay** (Turkey) said that his country, which was aware of the crucial importance of peacekeeping operations for international peace and security, believed that it was its duty to participate in such operations; it was determined to continue to do so and to enhance and diversify its presence. His country was actively participating in several United Nations missions and in a number of European operations. It was also participating in training activities and had, *inter alia*, hosted the Seventh United Nations Training Assistance Team Seminar, as well as a meeting on the control of refugees in peacekeeping operations. Moreover, the International Training Centre of the Turkish Armed Forces also trained both local and international staff.

2. It had been at Turkey's initiative that an agreement on the establishment of a multinational peace force in South-eastern Europe had been signed. At the international level, he reaffirmed Turkey's support for the initiatives taken by the United Nations to enhance African peacekeeping capacity and pointed out that it had offered to work with other Member States in exploring ways and means of enhancing that capacity.

3. The threats to international peace and security had become more complex and fraught with tragic consequences, requiring rapid and multidimensional responses. The establishment of the Rapidly Deployable Mission Headquarters, supplemented by an enhanced United Nations standby arrangements system, would make it possible to meet the need for a rapid reaction. In view of the specific nature of each crisis, his delegation hoped that the Department of Peacekeeping Operations would be given all the resources it needed to determine the most appropriate response so that the United Nations, which combined the essential characteristics of universality, credibility and legitimacy, could retain its leading role in the promotion of international peace and security.

4. Bearing in mind all the challenges, his delegation, which was, for obvious reasons, convinced that preventive diplomacy was the best way of resolving conflicts, supported all initiatives aimed at the enhancement of early warning and preventive action capabilities. In conclusion, he paid a tribute to all those who had lost their lives in the service of the United Nations.

5. **Mr. Nega** (Ethiopia) said that his delegation associated itself with the statement made by the representative of Jordan on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. Conflicts continued to rage in many parts of the world. In order to find lasting solutions and discharge the increased responsibilities it had been asked to assume, the United Nations was embarking on the task of strengthening its capacity to carry out peacekeeping operations successfully. Such operations must be based on the following principles: respect for national sovereignty and the territorial integrity of States, non-interference in internal affairs, the consent of States parties to a conflict, impartiality and non-use of force except in self-defence. Peacekeeping operations must also have clearly defined mandates and objectives, as well as adequate resources. The consent of States parties to a conflict required consultations at all stages of an operation. His delegation deplored the fact that, in a recent case, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations had not respected that fundamental principle.

6. His delegation shared the concerns expressed by the Secretary-General in his annual report on the work of the Organization on the question of humanitarian intervention. It believed, however, that, in view of the sensitive nature of that concept and the use that could be made of it to legitimize intervention in other areas, it was essential that it should be discussed in greater depth by the appropriate mechanisms of the General Assembly.

7. His delegation welcomed the issuance of the Secretary-General's bulletin on the observance by United Nations forces of international humanitarian law (ST/SGB/1999/13) since experience in the field had shown that guidelines in that area met a real need. It was unfortunate that, in preparing the bulletin, the Secretary-General had consulted only with troop-contributing countries.

8. His delegation recognized that the primary responsibility for international peace and security lay with the United Nations. However, regional organizations such as the Organization of African Unity (OAU) had a role to play, as provided for in the Charter of the United Nations.

9. With regard to the enhancement of African peacekeeping capacity, his delegation advocated the establishment of a coordination mechanism in which the United Nations, OAU and all African countries, as well as other Member States involved in efforts to enhance African capacity, would participate. It attached great importance to cooperation between the United Nations and OAU. The Organization of African Unity needed the support of Member States, particularly in the form of contributions to its Peace Fund and to the United Nations Trust Fund for

Improving Preparedness for Conflict Prevention and Peacekeeping in Africa.

10. **Mr. Aponte** (Ecuador) said that his delegation supported the statement made by the representative of Jordan on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. Peacekeeping operations provided the clearest evidence of international cooperation in the service of international peace and security. That cooperation was, however, threatened since the United Nations was experiencing budgetary difficulties and found itself obliged to reduce expenditure on peacekeeping operations, particularly the deployment of peace forces. His delegation was concerned about the possible impact of this measure on the participation of developing countries in peacekeeping operations and feared that a reduction in the number of countries participating might lead to an imbalance in geographical representation in that crucial area.

11. Since it attached great importance to peacekeeping operations, Ecuador had taken part in them virtually from the outset and had offered to participate in the United Nations standby arrangements system. The offer still stood, and it counted on the Secretariat to ensure that decisions on its participation were taken with full transparency.

12. Peacekeeping operations were precious tools in the peaceful settlement of disputes when they were conducted in strict observance of the principles of the Charter, but they were essentially temporary and could not be used as a substitute for other peaceful means of settling disputes, such as the dialogue and negotiation that were indispensable to any permanent settlement.

13. Furthermore, the emphasis on peacekeeping operations should not obscure the importance of international cooperation for economic and social development. Indeed, all its aspects of development were at the heart of the quest for international peace and security. The pursuit of development goals even constituted preventive action in conflict settlement because it allowed the containment of hotbeds of tension.

14. Many countries lacked the means and capabilities needed to participate in peacekeeping operations. His delegation therefore supported the Secretariat's training efforts and endorsed the recommendation made by the Special Committee in paragraph 94 of its report. Thanks to support from the Canadian Government and the United Nations, Ecuador's armed forces had been able to participate in training courses in Canada and in Turin, enabling it subsequently to set up a school specifically geared to training for peacekeeping operations.

15. **Mr. Fils-Aimé** (Haiti) recalled that the collapse of the Soviet bloc in 1989 had, by putting an end to the tensions of a bipolar world and favouring a spirit of openness, awakened the hope that a new era of cooperation and peace was dawning. Unfortunately, that hope had been dashed. At the moment, one could point to some 30 conflicts throughout the world, and to deal with them the United Nations had to multiply its peacekeeping operations.

16. The safety of the personnel in the field posed serious difficulties, to the point that it had become the highest priority of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. He paid tribute to those who had lost their lives in the service of peace and welcomed the entry into force of the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel. While taking note with satisfaction that the number of women among the personnel had increased, his delegation was concerned about the reduction of Department staff at a time when it had to assume a range of complex and multidimensional tasks. After the 1991 *coup d'état* in Haiti, it had been the successive United Nations peace and security missions that had allowed the country to become once again a State under the rule of law. Knowing whereof it spoke, his Government was therefore troubled by the possible impact on the Department's functioning if its funds were cut back and there were delays in reimbursing troop-contributing countries.

17. Although peacekeeping operations could not definitively settle conflicts whose causes often went far back, they nevertheless helped to create a climate of détente and conditions that were favourable to lasting peace and security. The Charter provisions on the settlement of disputes and the fundamental principles on which peacekeeping operations must be based should be borne in mind. Those principles, together with clearly defined mission mandates and objectives would guarantee the success of an operation. One could not overemphasize the importance of a dialogue between the beneficiaries of the operations, at both government and local levels, and the peacekeeping personnel, if only in the interests of the latter's safety.

18. While recognizing the sacredness of national sovereignty, it was cause for celebration that at the moment no more atrocities were being perpetrated in the name of an ideology nor genocides committed out of view of the media. The extermination of part of a State's population not only endangered its territorial integrity but also shocked the conscience of the world, and made it necessary to set aside respect for national sovereignty. Haiti counted on the Security Council to guarantee international peace and security.

19. Since the causes of conflicts could be social and economic, any peace plan must likewise contain provisions promoting the socio-economic growth and development needed to put the achievements of peacekeeping operations on a firm footing.

20. In conclusion, he thanked all the nations that had participated in the peacekeeping operations in Haiti and all those which had contributed in one way or another to improving the situation in his country.

21. **Mr. Singh** (Nepal) said that his delegation supported the statement of the representative of Jordan on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. Peacekeeping operations, no matter how useful, were not a permanent solution to conflicts. However, they could create a conducive atmosphere for the pursuit, through other peaceful means, of a lasting settlement and thus a peaceful reconstruction. Although over the years peacekeeping operations had changed considerably, their cornerstone remained the same principles of respect for sovereignty, non-interference and neutrality. Given the complexity and diversity of the tasks that peacekeeping operations were now expected to fulfil, participation in them should be as geographically broad-based as possible.

22. Such ambitious mandates required extensive resources, as could be seen from the revised budget estimates. Delay in the payment of assessed contributions by certain rich Member States created absurd situations: for example, the reimbursement owed to some developing and least developed countries could be as high as 125 times their annual assessed contributions. The lack of funds, especially for logistics and communications, was also affecting the deployment of new missions and the liquidation of old ones. His delegation appealed to the sense of responsibility of the legislative bodies.

23. Since the credibility and effectiveness of any new operation depended on the swiftness with which it was deployed, the Rapidly Deployable Mission Headquarters should be fully staffed without delay, as recommended by the Special Committee. He deplored the violence committed against United Nations personnel and humanitarian personnel, and pointed out that 39 of his countrymen had fallen victim since Nepal had been participating in peacekeeping operations. He therefore welcomed the entry into force of the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel. In conclusion, he reiterated Nepal's firm policy of maintaining and increasing its participation in peacekeeping operations, and said that in January 2000 a seminar on peacekeeping activities would be held in Nepal's Peacekeeping Training Centre.

24. **Mr. Chkheidze** (Georgia) recalled the recent kidnapping in Abkhazia of members of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG). Thanks to the efforts of the Government of Georgia, it had been possible to secure their release. The incident, which raised once again the question of the safety of United Nations personnel, had occurred in a conflict zone in which anarchy prevailed. That alarming situation was prompting the Georgian authorities to consider integrating self-defence units and a civilian police component into UNOMIG. Furthermore, the issue of the protection of displaced persons and returnees in Abkhazia should be considered in the context of the peacekeeping operation, in particular by taking into account the recommendations of the Secretary-General in his report on the protection of civilians in armed conflict (S/1999/957).

25. The operations in Kosovo and East Timor had illustrated the multidimensional nature of peacekeeping operations. That development was basically related to the spill-over of intra-State conflicts whose complex nature called for an integrated approach to address security, human rights, population displacement and arms smuggling concerns. That degree of complexity required the United Nations to be equipped with corresponding tools and capabilities, by further developing the standby arrangements system and establishing the Rapidly Deployable Mission Headquarters.

26. The Georgian delegation welcomed the publication of the Secretary-General's bulletin on observance by United Nations forces of international humanitarian law (ST/SGB/1999/13). It would also welcome a definitive version of the draft rules of engagement for peacekeeping personnel which, together with the guiding rules and principles as set out in the aforementioned bulletin, would establish a precise legal framework for the conduct of peacekeeping personnel.

27. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations continued to play an indispensable role in the management of multidimensional operations. The Georgian delegation fully endorsed the process of rationalizing its activities and expressed its appreciation for the tireless efforts of UNOMIG to promote a peaceful settlement of the conflict in Abkhazia.

28. The Department's programme for training trainers was of particular relevance for developing the capacities of Member States in the area of peacekeeping. The Georgian delegation proposed to organize training courses for trainers in Tbilisi (Georgia). Peacekeeping was a common responsibility of the international community; that had prompted Georgia for the first time to deploy a battalion in

Kosovo. That battalion could be made available to the United Nations at short notice.

29. **Mr. Tekaya** (Tunisia), associating himself with the statement made by the representative of Jordan on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, said that the international community should give greater prominence to preventive diplomacy, collective security, the peaceful settlement of conflicts and respect for international law in the maintenance of international peace and security. The United Nations had certainly done much for peace but there were still many areas of tension and conflict, particularly in Africa, which called for stronger international action and better coordination of activities.

30. The initiatives on behalf of peace were ongoing, as demonstrated in the past 12 months by the launching of new peacekeeping operations of unprecedented complexity and scale, so that the international community and the Organization were now playing for new stakes. He reiterated the principles that should guide peacekeeping operations: respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of States, non-interference in the internal affairs of countries, consent of the parties, impartiality and non-use of force except in self-defence.

31. He welcomed the fact that Africa, specifically through the Organization of African Unity and its Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, had established conflict resolution as one of its priorities and wished to make preventive diplomacy its favoured tool. However, the cooperation that existed between the Organization of African Unity, the United Nations and the international community must be strengthened and the institutional capacity of the Organization of African Unity must be enhanced. Nevertheless, that did not exonerate the international community from the obligations laid down in the Charter of the United Nations, which conferred on the Security Council the principal responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, as recalled by the Secretary-General in document A/54/63-S/1999/171. To keep the peace it was sometimes essential for the international community to intervene directly through a peacekeeping operation.

32. Tunisia hoped that, once it was approved by the General Assembly, the procedure for adopting the recommendations made by the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations would facilitate consideration of issues related to those operations. As proof of its commitment to the principles and objectives of the United Nations, in particular international peace and security, Tunisia had been participating in various peacekeeping operations since the 1960s and in June 1999 had signed a memorandum of understanding with the United Nations to associate itself to the extent of its means with the United Nations standby arrangements system.

33. **Mr. Kuindwa** (Kenya), associating himself with the statement made by the representative of Jordan on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, said that, as a token of its commitment to the promotion of international peace and security, Kenya had for many years been participating in United Nations peacekeeping operations and currently had military observers and civilian police monitors in six missions in Africa and elsewhere. In addition, Kenya would be contributing troops to the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) and the International Force, East Timor (INTERFET).

34. As a member of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), Kenya had also taken diplomatic initiatives alongside other countries to find peaceful solutions to conflicts in the region. Nevertheless, while commendable initiatives had been taken by African leaders, the Security Council must continue to assume its obligations under the Charter of the United Nations in the area of international peace and security by strictly observing the principles and objectives enshrined in the Charter. Kenya therefore urged the Security Council to establish clear criteria for authorizing peacekeeping and enforcement action which would be applicable under the same conditions and with the same commitment everywhere in the world. It was regrettable that the Security Council, through its inertia in the face of certain conflicts in Africa, had cast doubt on the international community's commitment to that continent. Whatever the region of the world, it was unacceptable for the Security Council to offload its responsibilities onto other bodies.

35. Kenya of course attached great importance to the principle of cooperation between the United Nations and regional bodies, as enshrined in Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, and welcomed the fact that the Department of Peacekeeping Operations was engaged in enhancing the capacities of African countries. Kenya urged the international community to focus more on the continent's material needs and to contribute generously.

36. Kenya was deeply concerned about the financial crisis facing the United Nations which forced the Organization to borrow from peacekeeping funds to finance regular budget activities, leading to delays in the reimbursement of sums due to countries providing troops and equipment and adversely affecting the capacity and will of countries, particularly the developing countries, to participate in new

missions. Kenya therefore invited all Member States to pay their assessed contributions in full, on time and without conditions.

37. With regard to procurement, the Kenyan delegation recalled General Assembly resolution 51/231 and underlined the importance of transparency and the fact that it would be desirable when procuring goods and services of equivalent prices and standards for preference to be given to the developing countries, and particularly those which contributed troops.

38. With regard to strengthening the Civilian Police Unit in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the role of the Civilian Police Adviser referred to in document A/54/87, Kenya urged the Secretariat to fill posts that had remained vacant, as authorized by the General Assembly in mid-1998.

39. In conclusion, he emphasized that it was imperative to ensure the protection of personnel and paid a tribute to those who had lost their lives in the service of the United Nations.

40. **Mr. Ovia** (Papua New Guinea) supported the statement made by the representative of Jordan on behalf of the Movement of Non-aligned Countries. The guidelines for peace-keeping operations should be clearly defined, particularly with regard to humanitarian law, and greater transparency was needed in consultations between the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and Member States.

41. The maintenance of peace and security was one of the core missions of the United Nations. Although it had been suggested that all peacekeeping operations should be financed by assessed contributions, abolition of voluntary contributions could damage the Organization's rapid response capability in the event of a conflict or humanitarian crisis. It would be preferable to maintain the current system and to ensure that all Member States paid their assessed contributions in full, on time and without conditions. When awarding procurement contracts, low priority should be given to Member States with the capacity to pay which did not fulfill their financial obligations. Priority should be given to developing countries, particularly troop contributors, as long as the prices were competitive.

42. The Security Council should approach all conflicts, irrespective of location, in a timely manner and with equal commitment. United Nations interventions in the interest of preserving international peace and security could not be treated as interference. The principle of non-interference did not apply when States acted against the territorial integrity of another State, and, in accordance with Chapters VII and VIII of the Charter, that principle was subject to the collective interests of the United Nations. Unfortunately, in some recent conflicts, for instance East Timor, indecision and procrastination by the United Nations had produced tragic results. His delegation welcomed, however, the deployment of INTERFET, led by Australia, and the United Nations plans to rebuild the island and resettle its displaced people.

43. His delegation once again thanked the members of the South Pacific Forum as well as the current and former members of the Security Council for their support to the Bougainville peace process. Normalcy had not yet been fully re-established , and therefore his Government was requesting the Security Council to extend the mandate of the peace monitors there. The United Nations presence in Bougainville, in particular through the Peace Process Consultative Committee, was helping to build trust between the Government and the parties, to ensure compliance with agreements, and to guarantee impartiality. The efforts of all parties should lead to free and democratic elections during 2000. Much remained to be done, however, to ensure a lasting peace.

44. His delegation hoped that the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations and the United Nations as a whole would continue to carry out those tasks.

45. **Mr. Hughes** (New Zealand) said that the adoption of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) on a political solution to the question of Kosovo was proof, if any was needed, that the United Nations remained an indispensable organization. While his delegation welcomed Indonesia's recent acceptance of the results of the popular consultation held in East Timor under United Nations auspices, it deplored the tragic events that had followed. It denounced the disinformation campaign recently directed against Member States contributing troops to INTERFET and the United Nations Mission in East Timor (UNAMET) and was concerned about the security of their personnel. The deployment of INTERFET, to which New Zealand had made a significant contribution, had taken place at the request of the Indonesian Government and had been unanimously approved by the members of the Security Council.

46. His delegation supported the request of Papua New Guinea that the United Nations should maintain its presence at Bougainville. The Department of Peace-keeping Operations, including the Mine Action Service, must have adequate staffing and funding in order to remain effective. His delegation supported the statement by the representative of Japan and regretted the growing reliance on voluntary contributions. Only assessed contributions would guarantee

the collective responsibility of Member States, the financial security of peacekeeping operations and equal treatment for all regions. It was imperative for Member States to pay their assessed contributions in full, on time and without conditions.

47. New Zealand fully supported the recommended changes in the working methods of the Special Committee. It was a committed supporter of the United Nations role in the maintenance of international peace and security. The challenges faced by the Organization were made all the more difficult by the complexity of contemporary conflicts, especially those inside national boundaries where civilians were often the targets of opposing factions, but they were also aggravated by budgetary issues, a problem that Member States could act on. In conclusion, his delegation paid a tribute to the members of United Nations peacekeeping forces and those who had given their lives in the service of the United Nations.

48. **Mr. Yel'Chenko** (Ukraine) said that his delegation was pleased that the United Nations had been able to meet the challenges of the past 12 months. By organizing two multinational operations and other activities in Kosovo and East Timor, the United Nations and the Security Council had reaffirmed their primary role in the maintenance of international peace and security. Despite their limitations, United Nations peacekeeping operations remained an indispensable instrument.

49. The African continent required urgent assistance. Ukraine hoped that the Security Council, which was about to authorize the deployment of a new operation in Sierra Leone, would soon be able to do so in the Democratic Republic of the Congo as well. Ukraine would make every effort to see that the Security Council gave equal attention to conflicts wherever they arose.

50. Since 1994, Ukraine had advocated the establishment of a preventive mechanism that would allow the United Nations to monitor potential sources of global conflict and carry out large-scale military interventions. It agreed with the Secretary-General on the need for a transition from a culture of reaction to one of prevention.

51. His delegation agreed that the issue of humanitarian intervention and its political and legal implications should be considered in greater detail in other forums. However, he drew attention to the need to adapt the existing mechanisms for international security. No violations of human rights, whatever their motivation, scale and origin, could be tolerated. However, without clear and universally accepted international norms for humanitarian intervention, no enforcement action could be taken on the grounds of humanitarian law by regional arrangements or organizations without authorization from the Security Council (Article 53 of the Charter). Ukraine stood ready to participate in further discussion of that subject in practical terms.

52. Cooperation between the United Nations and regional arrangements should be intensified in accordance with the provisions of Chapter VIII of the Charter, while maintaining the key role of the Security Council.

53. His delegation strongly condemned the acts of violence perpetrated against United Nations personnel, in particular in Kosovo, Burundi and Abkhazia and called on all countries which had not yet done so to accede to the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel. The safety of personnel must be guaranteed at all stages of operations: planning, deployment, management and withdrawal. The responsibility of host Governments with regard to United Nations personnel should be reinforced and the model status-of-forces agreement should make reference to the Convention. Ukraine fully endorsed the proposals put forward by the Deputy Secretary-General on 14 October 1999 and supported the comprehensive review of security requirements by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

54. Ukraine welcomed the publication of the final text of the guidelines for observance by United Nations forces of international humanitarian law (ST/SGB/1999/13). Like other Member States, however, it deeply regretted that the document had been issued without being approved by all the members of the Special Committee. It would have been preferable to have detailed consultations with the Secretariat as well as at the next session of the Special Committee, reissuing the document if necessary once consensus had been reached.

55. The ability of the United Nations to react rapidly to crises anywhere in the world must be reinforced. Ukraine had joined the standby arrangements system in 1994, had signed a memorandum of understanding to that effect in 1997 and continued to increase its participation in peacekeeping operations and civilian police actions. It welcomed the completion of a draft set of standard operating procedures for civilian police operations and hoped that the Secretariat would soon develop draft guidelines on general principles regarding the role of civilian police. In April 1999, the Ukrainian Parliament had adopted a law giving Ukraine full discretion to participate in peacekeeping operations. It was ready to share its experience with the institutions of any countries which might be interested.

56. **Mr. Bandora** (United Republic of Tanzania) said that his delegation associated itself fully with those delegations

which had stressed that it was imperative to conduct peacekeeping operations in strict observance of the principles and purposes enshrined in the Charter. Clearly, therefore, the concept of humanitarian intervention merited careful consideration in future in order to ensure that it was not used to violate those fundamental principles. At the same time, the United Nations must study how to react swiftly and decisively when faced with situations requiring humanitarian action.

57. Notwithstanding the structural changes undertaken within the Secretariat to enhance capacity for peacekeeping operations, that improvement had benefited only a few missions. For the most part, planning and financing remained uncertain, in particular for peacekeeping operations in Africa. His delegation feared that the missions planned for Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and elsewhere in Africa would suffer the same fate as the operations undertaken in Rwanda, Liberia and more recently in Congo, which had been compromised by logistical problems and a lack of financial resources.

58. Those difficulties were the result of excessive reliance on ad hoc financing arrangements such as the Trust Funds to finance such operations. Although that system had functioned adequately elsewhere, that was not the case in Africa where nothing could replace the commitment of direct resources by the United Nations if peacekeeping operations were to be undertaken in an effective and sustainable manner.

59. His delegation welcomed the continued cooperation between the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the United Nations aimed at strengthening African capacity for peacekeeping. He thanked those countries which had contributed to African capacity-building with training and logistical support as well as those which had contributed to the Organization of African Unity Peace Fund.

60. The maintenance of international peace and security remained the primary task of the Security Council. Regional arrangements could certainly play a supporting role but the functions of the Security Council should not be totally devolved to the regions or to groups of countries even if some of the regions had the capacity to assume them fully. His delegation feared therefore that the new concept of "Lead States" to spearhead regional peacekeeping operations could be used in the future to bypass the United Nations.

61. His delegation commended the efforts under way to provide training to individuals participating in peacekeeping missions. He hoped that such training would be extended to as many countries as possible, so that developing countries could participate in missions, and that recruitment procedures would be more transparent and take into account the principle of balanced geographical representation.

62. He paid a tribute to the peacekeepers who were working in dangerous conditions and honoured the memory of all those who had lost their lives in the line of duty. He also thanked those delegations which had offered their condolences on the occasion of the death of President Julius Nyerere.

63. **Mr. Larraín** (Chile) paid a tribute to the humanitarian and peacekeeping personnel who had lost their lives in the service of peace, in particular the Chilean national assassinated in Burundi. He associated himself with the statements made by the representatives of Uruguay and Jordan on behalf of the countries of the Common Market of the Southern Cone (MERCOSUR) and the Non-Aligned Movement respectively.

64. The changing nature of conflicts required a multidimensional approach, as evidenced by the operations undertaken recently in Kosovo and East Timor. That meant that the mandates of such operations must be clearly defined, and have sufficient financial resources. The principles of consent of the parties, impartiality and non-use of force except in self-defence must also be respected, thereby conferring legitimacy on peacekeeping operations.

65. While welcoming the restructuring of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, he felt that its capacities should be reinforced to enable it to plan interventions and act rapidly.

66. Chile, which had always participated in United Nations peacekeeping operations, intended to organize in May 2000 an international seminar on the changing conditions of deployment for operations and was about to sign a memorandum of full accession to the standby arrangements system.

67. **Mr. Petrella** (Argentina) was of the view that, despite its failings, the United Nations was still the only legitimate instrument to guarantee the maintenance of international peace and security. Given the emergence of new types of conflict, it was necessary to strengthen early-warning mechanisms and preventive diplomacy, and the reconstruction of countries must be a priority in order to bring about lasting peace.

68. Actions to rebuild peace would be more effective when accompanied by sufficient resources to enable the affected countries to recover their stability and resume their place in the international community, and by improved coordination between the competent bodies.

69. Personnel should receive better training to enable them to undertake multidimensional tasks in the areas of peace-building, humanitarian assistance, the establishment of impartial police forces, disarmament, demobilization and the reintegration of combatants, the organization of elections, demining and long-term development.

70. Peacekeeping operations were not an end in themselves, but rather a tool of the international community. United Nations peacekeeping operations had many advantages over multinational forces. The deployment of the latter could only be justified on an exceptional basis and in accordance with the principles of the Charter and the decisions of the Security Council.

71. His delegation endorsed the comments made by the delegations of New Zealand and Japan. It wished to pay tribute to the personnel who had lost their lives in the service of the United Nations, and urged those States which had not yet done so to ratify the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel. United Nations personnel should not be exposed more than necessary and peacekeeping operations should receive adequate resources to ensure their protection in the field. His delegation, which had drawn the Security Council's attention to that point, welcomed the fact that the Council's resolutions now contained a specific reference to the provisions of the Convention. His delegation was considering the possibility of introducing proposals to widen the area of applicability of the Convention to cover all individuals and organizations in conflict areas. Specific action should also be taken to improve the security of personnel and to carry out investigations in order to prosecute those responsible for the killings.

72. The capacity of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations should be strengthened and the members of military and civilian police forces should receive better training to enable them to be more effective in the multiple areas in which they were required to operate. The United Nations could not be asked to undertake large-scale peacekeeping operations without being provided with the necessary resources. His delegation endorsed the provisions of resolution 51/243, which defined the requirements for the acceptance of gratis personnel and the phasing-out of those who did not meet those requirements.

73. Innovative solutions that respected the principle of geographical distribution should be devised to ensure that the reduction in the staff of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations would not affect the full functioning of the Department. He reiterated his delegation's support for peacekeeping operations and said that the Special Committee was the legitimate forum in which to address the different aspects of those operations.

74. **Ms. Chassoul** (Costa Rica) said that her country had always maintained that social justice was impossible without peace and democracy and that, conversely, peace and democracy could not be achieved without social justice in the context of development. The peace and security required for a nation's social development could be achieved and consolidated only on the basis of comprehensive work that went well beyond the supervision of ceasefire agreements and included other elements that were crucial to the transition from a conflict situation to peace, and from peace to democracy.

75. Costa Rica's experience had led her delegation to express its dissatisfaction with the manner in which humanitarian questions were handled in conflict situations and to propose a new way of addressing the issue. Costa Rica had always believed that the traditional concept of peacekeeping operations should be expanded beyond the purely military aspects to political, humanitarian, economic and social issues. Costa Rica's position stemmed from its own experience, which had also taught it that a policy that was designed to strengthen democratically elected civilian governments and was accompanied by clear decisions on the reduction of military spending could only present advantages and free up resources that could be devoted to education, health, housing and social justice in the context of development, which were the best factors for promoting peace and security.

76. In its 1997 report (A/52/209), the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations had recommended that the United Nations should give particular attention to strengthening the institutional capacity of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and to measures to enhance the peacekeeping capacity of the African countries. In a presidential statement (S/PRST/1998/29) the Security Council had urged all States and relevant bodies to provide financial and technical support to strengthen African regional and subregional mechanisms. Her delegation had supported those initiatives because they made provision for the inclusion of humanitarian aspects of conflicts in peacekeeping operations. That meant changing the structure, composition and mandate of such operations, as well as coordination in order to ensure that humanitarian and human rights agencies would be present in the field.

77. She recalled the importance that the Secretary-General attached to strengthening Africa's capacity to participate in peacekeeping operations and endorsed his statement that the international community should not use measures aimed at

helping Africa as a justification for reduced engagement in the continent (A/54/63). Recent conflicts in Africa should not discourage the United Nations from undertaking peacekeeping missions on that continent; rather, they should constitute for the Organization a source of experience and a basis for the reorientation of its objectives and resources. Her delegation stood ready to support any United Nations operations designed to promote peaceful solutions with the ultimate objective of bringing about human development, not only the cessation of military activities.

78. **Mr. Osang** (Nigeria) said that, in view of the increasingly complex nature of conflicts, new strategies for peacekeeping should be developed. His delegation associated itself with the concepts of "preventive diplomacy", "preventive deployment" and "preventive disarmament" advocated by the Secretary-General as a peace-building strategy that addressed the root causes of armed conflicts.

79. More than ever before, the United Nations must work in partnership with other regional organizations in peacekeeping operations. In that regard, it had not given enough support to OAU in the latter's efforts to guarantee peace, security and stability on the African continent. The United Nations needed to pay as much attention to the plight of Africans in conflict as it had done to the plight of those in other regions. The success of the Military Observer Group of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOMOG) in West Africa, especially in Liberia and Sierra Leone, bore testimony to the value of and need for regional initiatives in peacekeeping. His delegation welcomed the decision to establish the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), which would take over the functions of ECOMOG and thus relieve the troop-contributing countries.

80. His delegation supported any efforts aimed at improving the financial position of the United Nations so that it could meet its peacekeeping obligations, and reiterated its call for the establishment of a special fund for peacekeeping operations that would not be subject to United Nations budgetary constraints. His delegation joined other delegations in calling on Member States to pay their assessed contributions in full, on time and without conditions. As a result of delays in the payment of contributions, the United Nations owed substantial amounts of money to many troop-contributing countries, including Nigeria.

81. His delegation viewed with great concern the frequency of attacks against United Nations peacekeeping personnel, three of whom had been killed during the past month in Kosovo and Burundi. Nigeria was committed to the goals and ideals of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security. It was convinced that the Organization remained the most important guarantor of the future of mankind.

82. **Mr. Lamdan** (Israel) said that it was regrettable that the Secretariat had not placed sufficient emphasis on the implementation of the recommendations of the Special Committee. His delegation looked forward to receiving the progress report requested in paragraph 125 of the report of the Special Committee (A/54/87). Based on his country's long experience with peacekeeping operations, he wished to comment on certain points in the report.

83. The smooth functioning of a peacekeeping operation depended on the clarity of its mandate, with well-defined objectives and a clear and unified command structure under United Nations authority. In the case of a cross-border conflict, it was also important to obtain the agreement of both countries concerned in establishing such a force.

84. The Security Council was the only body with the authority to establish a peacekeeping operation. He cited the example of a mission set up by the General Assembly which would perhaps not have failed if it had been established by the Security Council.

85. One of the prime functions of the Security Council should be to consider possible changes in the mandate of a force during a mission, as stated in paragraph 52 of the report. With regard to "sunset clauses", his delegation agreed that peacekeeping missions should not be extended indefinitely once they had completed their assigned tasks. Military forces should not undertake civilian operations, which could lead to a loss of neutrality, and in any event, there were other agencies within and outside the United Nations system responsible for dealing with the civilian aspects of conflict at all stages. As indicated in the report (paras. 74 and 83), better coordination was needed between the military and civilian components of peacekeeping missions, along with greater participation by non-governmental organizations.

86. Like Israel, many countries were unable to contribute troops to peacekeeping operations but would be able to contribute police forces. That form of participation should be encouraged and the Secretariat should in its next progress report, provide the draft guidelines on the general principles regarding the role of civilian police, in accordance with paragraph 98 of the report of the Special Committee.

87. He regretted that the international course on military liaison, a valuable course offered each year in Israel, had not

been mentioned in annex III of the report. In any case, it would be offered in the coming year.

88. No one would challenge the predominant role of the United Nations in peacekeeping, but events of recent years had shown that its role was not exclusive, especially in the sphere of peacemaking. If it wished to maintain its predominance, it must continue to prove that it was equal to the task and that it could continue to retain the confidence of the parties to a conflict.

89. **Mr. Mtewa** (Malawi) said that it was urgent to conduct a comprehensive review of peacekeeping operations in order to restore meaning to those noble missions. The killing of 13 United Nations staff members since the beginning of the year was a reminder of the need for all Member States to ratify the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel and to ensure its implementation. It was also important to distinguish between humanitarian operations and peacekeeping and to consider carefully the composition of personnel to ensure the missions' acceptability in the region concerned.

90. Malawi had been participating since 1995 in the peaceful settlement of conflicts and in peacekeeping operations. It was ready to provide troops in the service of peace in Africa and elsewhere and had expressed its desire to join the standby arrangements system. It was deeply concerned at the delays in reimbursements to troop-contributing countries, particularly to developing countries, which might not be able to continue their participation if the problem was not solved. Malawi welcomed the $100 million contribution by the Government of Japan to the Trust Fund. It also expressed appreciation to the European Union for the assistance provided through the Southern African Development Community to facilitate its participation in peacekeeping operations. It had also enjoyed technical support from the United States in that area.

91. As a country particularly affected by the proliferation of small arms, Malawi supported the view that the issue should be an integral part of peacekeeping operations. The presence of those weapons represented a source of criminal activity, social disturbances and threats to the peace. Smugglers took advantage of the climate of instability to pursue their criminal activities.

92. The importance of enhancing the early warning system for conflict prevention needed no emphasis. The humanitarian catastrophes in Africa and the recent events in East Timor were reminders of the need to focus on that matter without delay.

93. **Mr. Lucas** (Angola), after recalling the basic principles of peacekeeping, said that peacekeeping operations were not a substitute for a permanent solution or for addressing the underlying causes of conflict. Angola shared the position expressed by the Movement of Non-aligned Countries, that the Security Council should approach all conflicts, wherever they were located, with the same commitment. The partnership between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and African sub-regional organizations had already produced positive results and should be strengthened for the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts, bearing in mind the responsibilities of the international community, especially the Security Council, for the maintenance of international peace and security.

94. In his report on the enhancement of African peacekeeping capacity, the Secretary-General had stated that such activities made sense only if the parties to the conflict had "a genuine desire ... to implement peace agreements and move towards reconciliation", which unfortunately had not happened in Angola. The peace agreements were simply ignored by the party which had lost the election, which had never had any intention of accepting the results, even if they had been favourable to it. That situation had led to a new war of catastrophic proportions, after 18 months of ceasefire. Thanks to the efforts of the United Nations and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, a new peace agreement had been concluded after a year of intense negotiations, but the absence of the leader of UNITA at the signing ceremony had indicated that his party had no intention of implementing it.

95. UNITA had fooled everyone, in particular the United Nations, whose mission had been to quarter, disarm and demobilize UNITA's army. Rather than demobilizing its troops, however, UNITA had mobilized new troops, reinforced its military capacity and attempted to spread the conflict to neighbouring countries, in particular the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Republic of the Congo and Namibia. After the death of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in a suspicious plane crash, the Angolan Government had seen the military option as the only remaining alternative for solving a problem that the United Nations had been unable to settle despite a large-scale peacekeeping operation.

96. Despite the resolutions adopted by the Security Council since 1992 condemning Jonas Savimbi and UNITA and imposing sanctions on the latter, the Angolan Government believed that the international community could and should do more to make Mr. Savimbi accept the consequences of his criminal behaviour, which had caused

indescribable suffering to the Angolan people. The international community should no longer humour Jonas Savimbi but should inscribe him on the list of war criminals to be captured and brought before the criminal courts. That would be an honourable conclusion to the failed peacekeeping operation that had been such a disappointment to the Angolan people and the international community.

97. **Ms. Zografska-Krsteska** (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) said that at the dawn of the new millennium, there were continued threats to peace and stability throughout the world. Because the costs of conflict resolution were far greater than those of conflict prevention, it was important to strengthen the early warning mechanism in order to resolve disputes before they erupted into violent confrontation. From 1992 to February 1999, her country had hosted the first preventive mission, the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force (UNPREDEP). Her Government, the United Nations and other international stakeholders considered that mission to have been a great success for both the Organization and her country.

98. Her Government was providing logistical support to the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), which had set up a liaison office in Skopje. Although her Government supported full implementation of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999), which had established the mandate of UNMIK, it was also in favour of the comprehensive implementation of the Stability Pact for South/Eastern Europe. In that regard, her delegation agreed with the many delegations which had expressed the view that social and economic problems were among the root causes of many conflicts and should therefore be addressed properly. For that reason, the countries of South-Eastern Europe viewed the Stability Pact not only as a document expressing their political commitment to integration into the Euro-Atlantic structures, but also as a basis for the comprehensive reconstruction and development of the region.

99. The Secretary-General attached great importance to peacekeeping, which was a vital instrument in assisting African States to resolve conflicts and to create the conditions for peaceful development (A/54/63-S/1999/171). In order to prevent further conflicts and to resolve current conflicts, partial solutions to African problems should be avoided as much as possible. The international community should endeavour to promote the economic development of the continent and its integration into the global economy.

100. Her delegation joined other countries in calling on all Member States to meet their obligations under the Charter by paying their assessments in full, on time and without conditions so that peacekeeping missions could be properly financed. Despite its limited resources, her country was contributing to the resolution of the Kosovo crisis by making its national capacities available to the international community, *inter alia* by providing shelter for over 350,000 refugees, a figure which was equivalent to 18 per cent of its population. One way to strengthen her country's economy and that of other countries affected by conflicts along their borders would be to make the procurement process more transparent.

101. Her Government believed that the mandates of peacekeeping operations should not be restricted to military tasks but should also include other activities such as disarmament, demobilization, civilian police activities, humanitarian assistance and measures to combat the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. In that regard, her delegation stressed the need to strengthen the partnership between the United Nations and the regional and subregional organizations and to define a clear mandate for peacekeeping operations. Her country was ready to contribute to that process.

102. **Mr. Sattar** (Secretary of the Committee), speaking on the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.4/54/L.2, said that in paragraph 2 of the draft resolution, the General Assembly would endorse the proposals, recommendations and conclusions of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, contained in paragraphs 43 to 130 of its report. In paragraph 126 (a) of that report, the Special Committee requested that its report should be circulated in official form no later than four weeks after the completion of its substantive session. In that connection, he drew attention to the six-week rule for the distribution of documents in the six official languages (A/RES/53/208 B, para. 3) and the need for documentation to be submitted to the Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services at least 10 weeks prior to the beginning of the session. The report of the Special Committee had indeed been issued four weeks after its submission to the Department.

103. With regard to the resumed session of the Committee, it was scheduled to hold one meeting, in New York, which would be added to the calendar of conferences. The only pre-session documentation would be the report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations. The meeting would be serviced, and summary records provided, in all six official languages pursuant to General Assembly resolution 49/221.

104. Should the General Assembly adopt the draft resolution, the conference-servicing cost of the meeting was estimated at US$ 21,500. The necessary resources were

provided for under section 2 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001. No additional appropriation would therefore be required under the programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001.

Draft resolution A/C.4/54/L.2

105. **The Chairman** introduced draft resolution A/C.4/54/L.2 entitled "Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects". If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to adopt the draft resolution without a vote in accordance with the sponsors' wishes.

106. *Draft resolution A/C.4/54/L.2 was adopted.*

107. **The Chairman** said that the Committee had thus completed its consideration of agenda item 90.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.

United Nations A/C.4/54/SR.14

General Assembly
Fifty-fourth session

Official Records

Distr.: General
12 November 1999

Original: English

Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

Summary record of the 14th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 25 October 1999, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Zackheos ..... (Cyprus)

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99-81854 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 87: International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space (A/54/20, A/C.4/54/8, A/CONF.184/6)

1. **The Chairman** said that significant progress in the development of space science and technology had made it possible to exploit outer space and to understand more about the origin of the universe, and its future. International cooperation among 16 nations was leading to the construction of the international space station, marking the dawn of an era of living and working in outer space.

2. Space science and technology had important practical applications for daily life, including worldwide satellite communications, management of land and ocean resources, prediction of climate changes and early warning of disasters. In order to make the benefits of space science and technology available to everyone, international cooperation was essential. The United Nations, through the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, had worked to promote cooperation in outer space, and had established a legal regime governing space activities which reflected the collective will of Member States to carry out space activities for peaceful purposes and for the benefit and in the interests of all countries.

3. It was currently necessary to build on that success and to meet the new challenges arising from rapid developments in space activities. Space science and technology must shape a better world for all, as the potential for sustainable development through space applications had not yet been fully utilized in many developing countries, where the tools provided by space science and technology were most needed.

4. The Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III) had yielded successful results, particularly for developing countries. The Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development was intended to serve as the agenda for all Member States, international organizations and industry to take concrete and coordinated action to address global challenges.

5. The Technical Forum of UNISPACE III had provided a unique opportunity for policy makers, managers of aerospace companies, scientists and engineers as well as university students to exchange views on various space-related issues and to contribute to the substantive work of the Conference. The Space Generation Forum, a group of young professionals and university students, had contributed greatly to the success of the Conference. That should provide a unique model for forging partnerships with civil society, in particular with non-governmental organizations and industry.

6. **Mr. Rao** (India), Chairman of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, said that the practical benefits of space technology applications touched virtually every facet of human endeavour and had become the best hope of achieving rapid socio-economic development and improved quality of life on a sustainable basis. The United Nations had made very significant contributions towards the promotion of international cooperation in the exploration and peaceful uses of outer space. As the world had moved from an era of confrontation to an era of cooperation, greater emphasis had been placed on the practical applications of space science and technology for human development. Space technology applications must benefit all countries, in particular developing countries, to enable them to meet the basic needs of their people.

7. Rapid advances in space technology, globalization of economic activity and the increasing commercialization of space technology applications had provided a strong motivation to hold UNISPACE III, an event which had marked the beginning of a new era of space for human development. The Conference, of which he had been elected President, had been held in Vienna, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 52/56, from 19 to 30 July 1999 as a special session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, open to all Member States. Its report was in document A/CONF.184/6. There had been more than 2,500 participants, including delegates from 100 States as well as representatives of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, industry and research institutions.

8. UNISPACE III had had two primary objectives: to promote effective use of space solutions to address regional and global problems, and to strengthen the capabilities of Member States, particularly developing countries. Consideration had been given to the status of space science and technology and the challenges of the future; ways and means of promoting space activities, particularly in developing countries, for achieving sustainable integrated development; international space law and the promotion of international cooperation. The Conference had identified common goals to be pursued and action to maximize space benefits for all humanity.

9. The Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development, adopted by consensus, reflected the commitment of all participating States to integrate advances in space science and technology in the agenda for socio-

economic development towards the establishment of a truly equitable global village.

10. Among the other recommendations of the Conference was a recommendation that the General Assembly should extend the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction for one more decade, in view of recent advances in space technology which could provide significant support to the work of the disaster management community.

11. An important contribution had been made by the Technical Forum, at which high-level policy makers, managers of aerospace companies, directors of research institutions, members of non-governmental organizations and university students had discussed various aspects of space-related activities, and produced innovative proposals, some of which had provided a basis for recommendations by the Conference. The integral involvement of the space industry in many activities of the Conference had been crucial to its success. The Space Generation Forum, organized by and for young professionals and university students, had presented unique recommendations and proposals, some of which had been included in the Vienna Declaration.

12. UNISPACE III had demonstrated that, under the umbrella of the United Nations, governments and civil society could work effectively to address issues of concern to all people; that should set an excellent precedent for the participation of all sections of civil society, including industry, as important partners of the United Nations.

13. The cost of organizing the Conference had been kept at a minimum. Since no specific conference budget had been allocated to UNISPACE III, the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, acting as the Preparatory Committee for the Conference, had had to identify innovative ways of securing resources for the Conference. That experience could be useful for future global conferences.

14. The real impact of UNISPACE III could be judged only when its recommendations were translated into concrete action. The Conference could not be regarded as a success until the people of the developing countries were given access to space science and technology. Member States had a responsibility to implement the recommendations of the Conference.

15. Introducing the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (A/54/20), he said that the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee had made a major contribution to the international efforts on space debris and had finalized its technical report on the subject. The Legal Subcommittee had continued its consideration of matters relating to the definition and delimitation of outer space and to the character and utilization of the geostationary orbit, and had established a working group to review the status of the five international legal instruments governing outer space, which had recommended measures to achieve full adherence to those instruments.

16. The Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space had reached agreement on a new approach to setting the agendas of the Subcommittees that would enable both Subcommittees to consider, in a flexible manner, various issues arising from the rapidly expanding space activities.

17. Space science and technology could be powerful tools for achieving rapid socio-economic and cultural development. Yet there was a growing disparity in the quality of life between the rich and the poor. More than a quarter of the people in developing countries still did not have access to life's basic necessities; their problems were further exacerbated by explosive population growth, rampant poverty, over-depletion of resources and degradation of the environment. Economic globalization in the technologically advanced world had resulted in further marginalization of countries with scarce resources and could lead to severe social distress and civil strife. Sustainable development was crucial for maintaining peace and security in many parts of the world. With the use of space science and technology, humanity could face the challenge of harmonizing development to meet the basic needs of the people and provide educational opportunities for all, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

18. **Mr. Valdivieso** (Colombia) said that UNISPACE III had achieved significant results; support must now be given to the implementation of regional recommendations and cooperation in the sphere of technology. At the Conference, Colombia had stressed the need for a global cooperation model that would achieve real benefits for all countries, especially developing countries. It had described some national achievements based on the use of space technology. Technological resources were invaluable at the regional level, for example in the prevention and reduction of natural disasters. Concrete, viable and effective projects should be generated for developing countries by United Nations specialized agencies, developed countries and providers of space technology, in implementation of General Assembly resolution 51/122. In 1998, at the regional preparatory conference, the Latin American countries had made specific proposals on cooperation in the region, based on national capacities.

19. Access to technology must be linked with the development of science and technologies applicable to individual requirements. Advances in international space law, with clear rules based on equity, would make it possible to expand possibilities for participation. That equity should be reflected in the allocation of and access to frequency bands and geostationary satellite orbits, taking into account in particular the needs of developing countries. Colombia hoped that work on the definition and delimitation of outer space and on the utilization of the geostationary orbit would be continued by the Legal Subcommittee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space until a solution was found to satisfy all concerned. It welcomed the restructuring of the agendas of the two Subcommittees, and the review of the status of the international legal instruments governing outer space. Greater dynamism in the work of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies would enable it to face the needs in the area of space science and technology and development of space law reflecting the progress of space technology.

20. The implementation of the Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development, including initiatives such as the establishment of a voluntary fund that would be used to finance the activities of regional centres for space science and technology education, would require periodic follow-up and concerted efforts to achieve progress. In the new century, the objective should be to achieve a more equitable world, in which all would participate in the advances of humanity.

21. **Mr. Pietikäinen** (Finland) spoke on behalf of the European Union. The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia and the associated countries of Cyprus and Malta, and the European Free Trade Association countries and members of the European Economic Area, Iceland and Norway, aligned themselves with his statement.

22. UNISPACE III had been the first global conference of the United Nations in which industry and civil society had participated as full partners of governments, reflecting the increasing economic use of outer space and the rapidly growing importance of private companies in that area as well as the heightened interest of citizens in matters relating to outer space. The involvement of the private and commercial sectors in the Technical Forum showed that industry was playing a key role in the development of space technology and its applications, and the exchange of views between governments, the scientific community and business and industry had provided opportunities to forge mutually beneficial relationships. In addition, the Space Generation Forum had given young space professionals an opportunity to express their hopes and concerns about the uses of outer space. "The Space Millennium: Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development" and its related action points had been the most important outcome of the Conference and offered a framework for cooperation in the utilization of space technology as a tool for sustainable development.

23. International space activity was undergoing a period of great change in the areas of practical applications and the development of commercial markets and the list of innovations was impressive. Europe was a major actor in the field of space activities, with important programmes being implemented by European States, the European Union and the European Space Agency (ESA).

24. Multilateral financial institutions and States must facilitate the implementation of the recommendations contained in the Vienna Declaration. Proper implementation would significantly narrow the gap between the developed and the developing nations. The private sector was also a potential partner in future activities and its participation in relevant projects should be encouraged.

25. He noted with satisfaction the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) (A/54/20) on its forty-second session, held from 14 to 16 July 1999. He noted that the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee had concluded its three-year investigation into the issue of space debris. It was clear that the amount of existing debris needed to be reduced and the creation of new space debris needed to be limited in order to protect outer space.

26. The European Union had supported the Committee's reform efforts in the past and in that context he welcomed the agreement on the restructuring of the agendas of the two Subcommittees reached at the forty-second session and looked forward to continuing efforts for the peaceful uses of outer space in the post-UNISPACE III era.

27. **Mr. Miyamoto** (Japan) acknowledged the increasingly important role of COPUOS in promoting international cooperation in the peaceful exploration of outer space. By encouraging research, disseminating information and establishing a legal framework to deal with the exploration of outer space, the Committee had enabled the international community to benefit from the uses of outer space. He therefore welcomed the progress made by COPUOS as well as UNISPACE III that year, including the adoption of the Vienna Declaration. The convening of UNISPACE III, with the participation of government and private sector representatives, had been a landmark achievement. He was especially pleased that international cooperation in Earth observation activities had been discussed extensively with

a view to addressing global environmental problems while responding to the needs of both developed and developing countries.

28. His Government's basic policies for the development of space for peaceful purposes were: the promotion of creative scientific research from a long-term perspective, the application of the results of space development to wider areas of society in order to meet social needs, cost-effective space activities, active international space cooperation, emphasis on unmanned systems with a view to enhancing their reliability and level of sophistication while continuing to contribute to manned systems within the framework of international cooperation, the coordinated development of Japan's space-related industries and the preservation of the space environment by addressing the issue of space debris.

29. Japan had undertaken numerous space activities and was an active participant in international cooperation for the peaceful utilization of outer space. Continued international cooperation in the use of outer space for the benefit of mankind was essential and his country was committed to playing an active role in advancing space technology and promoting international cooperation.

30. **Mr. Ri Kyong Il** (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) expressed satisfaction with the Vienna Declaration and its recommendations adopted at UNISPACE III. However, two major challenges remained before the Declaration could be implemented.

31. First, countries which possessed space technology tended to monopolize the exploration and use of outer space for their own benefit while developing countries such as his own faced serious constraints which aggravated their poor economic situation and increased their debt. The right of all countries, in particular the developing countries, to explore space must be respected and they must be encouraged to participate actively in the peaceful use of space. International cooperation to that end must be strengthened and the relevant international organizations must take concrete measures, such as technology transfer, financial support and scientific and technical training, in favour of the developing countries. The creation of a special fund to assist developing countries to participate in space activities and the designation of the 4 to 10 October of each year as World Space Week were positive steps.

32. Secondly, the growing militarization of outer space, such as the use of military satellites violated and threatened the sovereignty of States and he deplored the escalation of that militarization by some countries which were endeavouring to develop anti-missile defences. He suggested that the Legal Subcommittee should devote more attention to the development of measures to prevent the militarization of space.

33. He noted that his country had placed a satellite in orbit and was in a position to participate actively in the peaceful exploration of outer space. It would continue to develop its space technology to contribute to mankind's common heritage while participating actively in international cooperation efforts.

34. **Mr. Tiwathia** (India) expressed satisfaction that the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space continued to function well. UNISPACE III had been a success and he was gratified that an Indian scientist had been elected Chairman of the Conference. The Conference had taken stock of developments in space science and applications, explored new areas of cooperation, considered the changing economic and political environment which offered new opportunities for international cooperation and studied the constraints and issues faced by developing countries in building national capacities to benefit from space technology as well as ways to involve the private sector more closely in the process.

35. The Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development outlined the key strategies to address global challenges in that sector and should be given priority, including the establishment of a special voluntary United Nations fund for the purpose of implementing the recommendations of UNISPACE III. The relevant international organizations should support the implementation of those recommendations and COPUOS should develop a work plan to promote and accelerate the implementation process.

36. He expressed great concern over the growing risks posed by space debris. His country cooperated actively with the Inter-Agency Space Debris Coordination Committee (IADC) and the international community to mitigate the effects of debris. The report on space debris prepared by the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee should be widely disseminated and that Subcommittee should continue to seek effective solutions to regulate space debris.

37. Space technology played an important role in accelerating the socio-economic development of all countries, particularly developing countries, and India's space programme emphasized applications which benefited society as a whole. India had launched its own and other countries' satellites and data from Indian remote-sensing satellites were made available to the international community.

38. His delegation continued to explore ways to strengthen international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space. The United Nations affiliated Centre for Space Science and Technology Education in Asia and the Pacific, located in India since 1995, had enabled scholars from 25 countries in the region to share in space technology.

39. UNISPACE III had provided a unique opportunity for the global community to enhance the role of space in global development and well-being. However, in order effectively to address the concerns of developing countries, a balance must be maintained between commercialism and larger societal priorities. International cooperation in outer space could meet broader humanitarian needs such as disaster management and help address the problems of development. UNISPACE III must serve as a springboard to enhance global cooperation which alone would ensure the accomplishment of the goals collectively adopted at Vienna.

40. **Mr. Shobokshi** (Saudi Arabia) said that the space exploration effort and the growing use of space-related technology for peaceful purposes were beneficial to humanity as a whole. The Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space had done admirable work in that connection by anchoring knowledge obtained from the exploration of space in a set of international principles relating to the use of that knowledge. It was regrettable that programmes aimed at the militarization of space were still being undertaken.

41. His Government's conviction that space research and exploration could produce solutions to various problems on Earth had been demonstrated by, *inter alia*, the flight of a Saudi Arabian astronaut and the participation of the King Abdul Aziz City for Science and Technology in the work of UNISPACE III.

42. The Conference had produced a number of recommendations of interest to developing countries, notably with respect to scientific and technological applications, and it was to be hoped that those recommendations would be implemented.

43. His delegation looked forward to enhanced regional and international cooperation in space-related activities, as the potential spin-off benefits for the developing countries in such areas as agriculture, industry, medicine and remote sensing were substantial. Space research, in fact, was a means to economic growth and sustainable development, whence the crucial importance of the work of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.

44. **Mr. Gao Feng** (China) said that "The Space Millennium: Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development" adopted by UNISPACE III and reflected in the report of the Conference (A/CONF.184/6) was a document of historic significance that would help space science and technology to serve peaceful purposes, increase international cooperation in outer space and promote development and progress, particularly in the developing countries. His delegation concurred with the recommendations included in the Declaration, in particular on the establishment of a special voluntary United Nations fund for implementing the recommendations of UNISPACE III on designating the week of 4 to 10 October World Space Week and on a five-year review and evaluation of the UNISPACE III recommendations. He commended the Declaration to the Committee and the General Assembly for adoption.

45. He gave the Committee an overview of progress in Chinese space technology since the founding of the People's Republic, noting in particular that the Long March rocket had been launched successfully 15 times since 1996 and that China had developed, manufactured and launched, on its own, over 40 satellites with economic, scientific, technological and cultural applications. In some major areas of space science and technology, China had reached the highest international level, and space science and technology would continue to play an important role in the modernization of the country.

46. He stressed that China's tremendous progress in the space arena had been entirely the result of its own efforts and also that the task of modernization facing the country remained arduous.

47. China would be emphasizing inexpensive, non-toxic, non-polluting, reliable and large rockets with a view to launching high-capacity geostationary and other communication satellites for public use and gradually establishing a system that included also long-lived, reliable meteorological and resource satellites to meet the needs of the Chinese economy. It was developing manned space flight also, and hoped to achieve it early in the twenty-first century.

48. He stressed that all nations enjoyed equal rights to explore and use outer space, and that such activities should promote cooperation between peoples and better the lives and development of those peoples. Space activities should also contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security and to the survival of humankind. China therefore opposed any monopoly or militarization of outer space and favoured increased international cooperation in outer space based on peaceful uses, equality, mutual benefit, mutual learning and shared development.

49. In such cooperation, links with developed space Powers were important, but China would endeavour to expand also its cooperation with other, developing nations. China's recent successful launch of a joint Sino-Brazilian global resource satellite was an example of such South-South cooperation in space, which China would expand the better to serve humankind.

50. **Mr. Schaffhauser** (France) associated his delegation with the statement by the representative of Finland speaking on behalf of the European Union, and stressed that UNISPACE III had been important for the expanded use of space technology, particularly for the benefit of the developing countries.

51. The report of the Conference (A/CONF.184/6) was a solid foundation for the future work not only of the United Nations Office of Outer Space Affairs but also of States. Implementing the recommendations in the report would require a long-term effort not only by those countries facing the problems of development but also by the countries with the technology to meet the needs expressed at UNISPACE III and by the institutions capable of funding development projects reflecting the priorities which the Conference had highlighted. To be effective, international cooperation would demand an effort from everyone.

52. He noted that at the Conference a joint European Space Agency (ESA) — *Centre national d'études spatiales* (CNES) proposal had been made to promote international cooperation in the management of natural disasters, where Earth observation satellites could provide the responsible authorities with data to supplement information from other systems. To that end, ESA and CNES had announced that they would coordinate their space capabilities more closely and pool their satellite capacity to meet the demands of such authorities. The ESA-CNES initiative would supplement the work done in bodies such as the Committee on Earth Observation Satellites.

53. The process of adapting existing rules and developing new ones for outer space should continue within a United Nations framework: there were important regulatory issues to decide. Specifically, developments in outer space activities were posing the problem of how to tailor the existing legal provisions to the technologies that had been developed. As a common problem, it should be dealt with in a universal body such as the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, initially through its Legal Subcommittee.

54. Countries had a moral duty to take rapid action to reduce the production of space debris. In that connection, he recalled the proposal (A/AC.105/L.221 and Corr.1) to the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space at its forty-second session to the effect that, as the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee had finalized its technical report on the issue (A/AC.105/720), the Legal Subcommittee should be requested to express its views on the question of space debris and the applicability of existing treaties to it.

55. **Mr. Cassapoglou** (Greece) said that his delegation also fully supported the statement by the representative of Finland speaking on behalf of the European Union.

56. He himself was speaking also on behalf of the steering committee of a network of space technology and research institutes in Bulgaria, Greece, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Turkey and Greece — one analogous to the regional centres established under the United Nations Programme on Space Applications — which had just been set up at a series of meetings in Sofia. He thanked the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs and the other commissions and committees involved for their support and requested further support from the United Nations system in carrying forward the network initiative, which could play a very important role.

57. He supported the position of the representative of France concerning measures to deal with natural disasters and informed the Committee that he had attended a recent meeting between the International Telecommunication Union and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on ensuring the entry into force of the Tampere Convention on the Provision of Telecommunication Resources for Disaster Mitigation and Relief Operations. Members of the Committee should urge their Governments to sign and ratify the Convention, which would be a very important instrument for mitigating not only natural but also anthropogenic disasters.

The meeting rose at 4.50 p.m.

United Nations A/C.4/54/SR.15

General Assembly
Fifty-fourth session

Official Records

Distr.: General
17 December 1999
English
Original: Russian

Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

Summary record of the 15th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 27 October 1999, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Semakula Kiwanuka (Vice-Chairman) ..... (Uganda)

Contents

Agenda item 87: International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space (*continued*)

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99-81905 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 87: International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space (*continued*) (A/54/20; A/C.4/54/8; A/CONF.184/6)

1. **Mr. Dausa Cespedes** (Cuba) said that the concept of outer space as the common world heritage encompassed three main principles which should be defended by all States. The first principle was the necessity to preserve outer space exclusively for peaceful uses and to promote international cooperation in the use of outer space for such purposes, taking into account the imperative of achieving continued economic growth and sustainable development for all countries, in particular developing countries. As the new millennium neared, it was necessary to bridge the enormous gap dividing the vast majority of developing countries and the industrialized countries in the peaceful uses of outer space. Second, and just as important, was the need to prevent an arms race in outer space. In that connection, his delegation strongly objected to the fact that some nuclear Powers, which were also space Powers, were hindering the possibility of making progress within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament on the negotiation of an international treaty or instrument aimed at preventing an arms race in outer space. The third principle related to space law. His country shared the view that the legal regime currently applicable to outer space could not guarantee the prevention of an arms race in outer space, and it was therefore imperative to adopt new measures with adequate and effective verifying provisions.

2. The will and capability of contributing to the work of the Committee should be the single element to be taken into account when appointing its members.

3. The Committee's primary tasks were to develop affordable and appropriate techniques in order to minimize the potential consequences of space debris, as well as to give more attention to collisions of space objects, in particular those with nuclear power sources, with space debris.

4. His delegation noted with concern the attempts to revise the principles governing the use of nuclear power in outer space without taking into account the concerns of all countries, particularly the developing countries. His delegation again reiterated that such actions could represent a danger for mankind.

5. In the past decade, Cuba had sent the first Latin American into outer space. That had helped the country to develop and implement various investigations of great interest for Cuba's economic development. In that connection, his delegation attached great importance to strengthening regional cooperation with the objective of developing space-related research and also cooperation within the framework of the United Nations and the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS).

6. **Mr. Haggag** (Egypt) said that the adoption of General Assembly resolution 1348 (XIII) establishing COPUOS had been a historic event, as that Committee was the only body concerned with international cooperation in the field of the peaceful uses of outer space. Five important space treaties had been concluded, and a number of important legal principles had been established relating to research into outer space. In 1999 the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space had been held, at which the Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development had been adopted. It had established a firm basis for the application of space technology and the protection of the space environment, promoting development, education and training and public information on various aspects of space activity.

7. Egypt was very interested in the work of the Conference and hoped that all States would take the necessary measures to implement its recommendations and that the General Assembly, as provided for in paragraph 4 of the Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development, would, after a period of five years, review and evaluate the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III. His delegation confirmed the importance of expanding the scope of application and use of space technology in the developing countries and welcomed the recommendations of the Vienna Declaration concerning the establishment of a special voluntary United Nations fund for the purpose of implementing the recommendations of UNISPACE III. His delegation was also concerned that COPUOS should continue to take steps to enhance the scientific research potential of the developing countries and to expand their capacity to receive the necessary data on the application of space technology in various fields, including agriculture, industry, health care and remote sensing. In that connection, General Assembly resolution 51/122 of 13 December 1996 had special significance, as it contained a Declaration on International Cooperation in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space for the Benefit and in the Interest of All States, Taking into Particular Account the Needs of Developing Countries.

8. In view of Egypt's interest in the development of space science and technology, it had established, within the framework of the Ministry of Scientific Research, a Council on Space Science and Technology, which would be responsible for the development of a national programme for

the peaceful uses of outer space. The main elements of that programme would be the use of satellite technology to study the desert, the training of scientific personnel and the establishment of national scientific institutions in Egypt, and international cooperation to develop a space programme in Egypt and the use of the most advanced space technologies to develop local industry. In that field there had recently been a number of achievements, including the launching of the Egyptian satellite "Nilsat 1", which was to be used for television transmission. Preparations were being made to launch the "Nilsat 2" satellite. A ground station would also be built in the next year.

9. His delegation fully supported the efforts of COPUOS to set up a normative legal basis to regulate space exploration and to ensure that it was used exclusively for peaceful purposes. In that connection, the Committee would in the future play a central role in the development of norms of space law and international agreements on the application of space technology for peaceful purposes. It also hoped that the Committee would expand and strengthen all aspects of cooperation between States in those areas at the regional and international levels.

10. **Mr. Joedo** (Indonesia) said that the use of space technology had proved invaluable for monitoring changes in the environment, as well as evaluating, exploring and managing the exploitation of natural and non-renewable resources. Those techniques were needed to predict global weather changes and ocean movements and to improve the overall quality of life for humankind.

11. The role of COPUOS was of paramount importance in translating international cooperation into meaningful programmes on the regional, subregional and national levels, thereby leading to tangible results. His delegation welcomed the Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development and hoped that its provisions would be implemented. Space science and the related technologies constituted an important tool to overcome the obstacles of the next millennium. It was important to ensure that the infinite resources of outer space were utilized for the interests of all mankind.

12. At the present time, cooperation at all levels was not simply an arena for global development, but an imperative necessity. The time had come to expand cooperation between nations and to make it more effective. Space research could help to meet the current challenges and obstacles. It was vital to maintain effective channels of cooperation, so that the international community could marshal its concerted endeavours to ensure access to technology, including its transfer, use and development, while at the same time sharing information, training and education. The holding of regional seminars, conferences and in-depth training sponsored by the United Nations in the framework of space applications programmes were substantive methods to implement the opportunities for the future.

13. With regard to the work of the Legal Subcommittee, he noted that the item concerning the question of review of the Principles Relevant to the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space had been retained on the agenda.

14. Indonesia, as an equatorial country and a developing country, had always attached great importance to the question of the geostationary orbit. Assured access to the geostationary orbit, at the present time and in the future, had to be guaranteed. It was important to define a legal regime for its use. It would be useful for COPUOS to continue its discussions on that matter, taking into account the legal and political implications.

15. **Ms. Rusu** (Romania) said that the first United Nations space conference since the end of the cold war (UNISPACE III), held in Vienna in July 1999, had concluded with the adoption of some important documents, which contained a blueprint for the peaceful uses of outer space in the twenty-first century. The Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development and its related plan of action were the result of a fruitful process of consultation between decision-makers and international experts designed to identify ways of making better use of space-technology developments for the benefit of all mankind.

16. The regional preparatory conference for Eastern Europe, held in Bucharest in January 1999, had enabled the participating States to identify, in the light of the objectives of UNISPACE III, the issues of priority and specific interest for the region. Mention must be made in that connection of the establishment of the network of space science and technology education and research institutions for Central-Eastern and South-Eastern Europe. Scientific experiments using instruments developed by Romanian scientists had been carried out in a number of international space missions. Important scientific results had been obtained in astrophysics, fundamental space science, earth environment studies, microgravity research, thermal elasticity, and information processing.

17. Romania attached a great importance to regional and international cooperation to promote dialogue and development. In that connection it welcomed the cooperation agreement concluded in October 1999 between the European Space Agency and the Romanian Government and the signing at the end of October in Sofia of a regional cooperation agreement between Hungary, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Greece, Poland, the Slovak Republic,

Turkey and Romania. It also looked forward eagerly to the completion of the negotiation of a cooperation agreement between the Romanian Government and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).

18. Romania saluted the progress achieved in the establishment of regional centres for space science and technology education in other regions, including Asia and the Pacific, Africa, and Latin America and the Caribbean. Regional and international cooperation was the most promising way of sharing the benefits of space technology among all countries with a view to promoting their progress.

19. **Mr. Rayani** (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that UNISPACE III had emphasized the importance of providing the developing countries with opportunities to use the latest achievements of space science and technology for the purposes of economic development and for forecasting natural disasters, especially since outer space was not the exclusive property of any individual State but the common heritage of mankind.

20. Libya was genuinely interested in using outer space for peaceful purposes, especially from the standpoint of the benefits which such activity could bring mankind in the fight against desertification, in environmental protection, and in economic affairs. In that connection a welcome must be given to the results of UNISPACE III, held from 19 to 30 July 1999 in Vienna. His delegation had taken part in the Conference and had submitted a national report stating Libya's interest in establishing a national remote sensing and space research centre. The report also described ways and means of removing the obstacles to the development of scientific and technological cooperation and proposed measures for creating a national potential and strengthening cooperation with the centres and specialized institutions of other countries. An appeal must also be made for the curtailment of military spending in outer space, so that the resources thus released could be directed to the solution of the problems of the developing countries.

21. Libya supported the proposal for the creation of a special voluntary United Nations fund for implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III and the declaration of an international week to publicize the importance of the peaceful use of outer space. It also hoped that the developing countries would receive the necessary assistance to establish national institutions and committees to process the technology transferred by the developed countries. It also emphasized the importance of refusing to use outer space for military purposes and curbing the arms race in outer space. There must be full cooperation in that area between COPUOS and the Disarmament Commission. It had to be pointed out that some of the international activities of the big Powers constituted a threat to the developing countries. Libya reiterated its interest in the plan of action for space research and the peaceful use of outer space.

22. **Mr. Hodgkins** (United States of America) said that since the fifty-third session of the General Assembly COPUOS had recorded a number of significant achievements in promoting international space cooperation. The past year of accomplishment marked more than 40 years of service by COPUOS to the world community.

23. In 1958, soon after the launching of a satellite had imparted new intensity to the cold war, the General Assembly had taken a decision to create the Ad Hoc Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space in the hope of channelling the use of outer space towards constructive activities and preventing an arms race in outer space. Recognizing that the exploration of outer space held both promise and danger, States had tried to erect a structure which would foster mutually advantageous cooperation in that field. Since then COPUOS had been the only standing body of the General Assembly devoted to the attainment of that goal. While other United Nations organs, including the First Committee, held mandates to consider the military uses of outer space, COPUOS offered a forum focused exclusively on promoting the cooperative achievement of benefits from space exploration. During the four decades of its existence COPUOS had made a contribution to the development and adoption of five major outer space treaties and the establishment of valuable standards, which had acquired the status of international principles and generated a new branch of international law. COPUOS also played an important role in expanding the exchange of information among developed and developing countries on the latest advances in space exploration.

24. The United States space programme had been born at roughly the same time as COPUOS, at the height of the cold war and the intense rivalry for missile and space supremacy. Over time, fortunately, that context had changed, and the United States now saw its space activities primarily as an instrument of human advancement and international cooperation. It had sent its astronauts to the Moon, robots to Mars, and spacecraft to the farthest reaches of the solar system, but today it was engaged in a partnership with 16 other nations on the unique project to build an international space station. The United States space programme was headed by two institutions. It had begun in 1958 with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, which had recorded tremendous achievements in aeronautics and space research. In 1970 the United States had added the National

Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, which, among its many other functions, operated weather satellites. The year 2000 would mark the fortieth anniversary of the launch of TIROS I, the first weather satellite and the first in a continuous string of polar-orbiting environmental monitors.

25. The Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III), which the Office of Outer Space Affairs had had a major part in organizing, had been an event worthy of being the last major United Nations conference of the century. It should serve as a model within the United Nations system for the adoption of innovative methods to deal with issues of global concern. For that reason, among others, the report of the Secretariat on organizational matters relating to UNISPACE III was welcome, since it could provide guidelines for other United Nations bodies convening events that addressed important global issues, while keeping costs within existing resources. The Conference had succeeded in considering a wide range of topics with the extensive involvement of leading scientists, government officials and private sector representatives. His delegation noted with satisfaction that the report of the Conference contained recommendations and conclusions that supported its overall objectives for the Conference, including broader participation in activities related to the monitoring of the Earth and its environment; the identification of new areas conducive to international cooperation; increased support for existing international cooperation mechanisms; dissemination of information on space research areas and strategies for developing countries; improved coordination and less duplication among United Nations organizations involved in space activities; strengthened regional space cooperation; and the promotion of civil and commercial applications and use of outer space. His delegation was also pleased with the progress made on restructuring the work of the Committee and its Subcommittees and the new approaches to considering agenda items. Space exploration was entering a new era involving unprecedented cooperation on the International Space Station, cutting-edge technologies and innovative private and government arrangements.

26. **Mr. González** (Chile), speaking on behalf of the countries of the Common Market of the Southern Cone (MERCOSUR), said that the various conferences on the uses of outer space held over the past few years had led to an extensive informal plan of cooperation among the MERCOSUR countries and the associated countries of Bolivia and Chile, particularly in the academic and technical fields. There was still, however, no clear awareness of the scope and implications of the applications of space technology for current and future generations. The links between those applications and the achievement of human development and sustainable security, based on the application of the best technological tools, would make it possible to achieve higher standards of living. One of the essential elements in that respect was the protection of the Earth's environment and the management of its resources. Also crucial was the promotion of literacy and education in rural areas by improving and coordinating satellite-delivered educational programmes and infrastructure.

27. International cooperation played an essential role in that regard. Minimum conditions must be established to enable all Member States to tackle such major problems as extreme poverty with the most effective technological instruments available, the most important being space technology. The decision of UNISPACE III to establish a voluntary United Nations fund for the purpose of implementing its recommendations, particularly those concerning the activities of the regional training centres in space science and technology, was merely a reaffirmation at the global level of the powerful, sustained and systematic use that must be made of the applications of space technology.

28. Paradoxically, many countries possessed an enormous quantity of data but very limited means of processing it. It was therefore important that they should gain access to information on economic and social development. Efforts to ensure that space technology was used as a practical and effective tool to resolve the problems of humanity must continue. Action to reduce the effects of natural disasters was urgently needed to prevent or at least mitigate the complete or partial destruction of geographical regions which were frequently inhabited by the poorest populations. In that connection, it was essential to examine together the establishment of clearer and more practical legal norms or political arrangements which would enable people in various countries to live in increasing security and improve their chances of achieving progress under equal conditions.

29. The representatives of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, and of the MERCOSUR countries and the associated States, reaffirmed the importance of continued progress in the elaboration of standards contributing to the development of international space law and urged the States of the region to sign and ratify the relevant multilateral instruments. The MERCOSUR countries believed that it would be appropriate for the 1996 Declaration on International Cooperation in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space for the Benefit and in the Interest of All States, Taking into Particular Account the Needs of Developing Countries to be transformed into a solemn declaration at the next session of the General Assembly. They therefore

proposed that the issue should be considered by the Legal Subcommittee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space at its next session.

30. **Mr. Deirki** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the exploitation of outer space was moving at ever greater speed both quantitatively and qualitatively, reflecting humankind's aspiration to derive real scientific and economic benefits from what was a relatively new direction for the development of civilization. His delegation welcomed the trend towards broadening the scope of the peaceful uses of outer space, particularly for the benefit of developing countries, and expressed satisfaction at the decrease in military expenditure for space purposes. Outer space was increasingly being used for the resolution of the most important economic, environmental and medical challenges confronting the whole of humankind.

31. His delegation was extremely interested in the problems relating to the peaceful uses of outer space, as had been demonstrated by the participation of a Syrian astronaut in a space flight and by the work of the Syrian Arab Republic on remote sensing.

32. Clearly, if humankind was to achieve its stated aims in the peaceful uses of outer space, the whole international community must strive to honour existing agreements. Space law must, however, be developed further towards a total prohibition on the use of outer space for the further escalation of the arms race. It would therefore be useful for the Committee and the Conference on Disarmament to coordinate their work. More serious efforts should also be made to resolve the problems of space debris, particularly in the context of achieving nuclear security in outer space. The major role in that respect must be played by States with nuclear facilities in space. Such States should provide other countries with sufficient information on orbits, construction and the fuel used, as well as on measures being taken to provide guarantees that such facilities posed no danger to other countries.

33. **Mr. Yan Yahaya** (Malaysia) welcomed the positive achievements of UNISPACE III, including the adoption of the Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development, which was an important contribution to the development of space science and technology for peaceful purposes, to the enhancement of international cooperation in outer space and to the promotion of the economic development of all Member States. Malaysia fully concurred with the recommendations in the Declaration and believed that immediate action should be taken to establish a special voluntary fund to implement them.

34. All Member States, including Malaysia, benefited from the promotion of the peaceful uses of outer space which, along with its related technologies, had brought tremendous benefits to their overall development. It was encouraging that special attention had been given to space applications for environmentally sound and sustainable development. Member States must continue to support the Committee in its efforts to strengthen international cooperation for the peaceful use of outer space, including through further development of international space law.

35. With regard to Malaysia's recent achievements in space technology development and its utilization for peaceful purposes, mention should be made of the launching of two telecommunications satellites (MEASAT 1 and 2) three years previously. In addition, in collaboration with the United Kingdom, Malaysia had built its first micro satellite, TiungSAT-1, whose launching was unfortunately much delayed because of the unavailability of launch opportunities for small satellites. The scarcity and cost of launch opportunities for small satellites would negate their affordability and limit the number of countries that would develop and advance such technology. Nevertheless, Malaysia had embarked on the design of a second micro satellite for low earth orbit at the equator.

36. With regard to training and education, Malaysia had hosted a number of international training workshops on remote sensing and satellite technology. Several of its universities were offering degree courses in space technology such as remote sensing, astronomy and astrophysics. Space science was currently part of the formal science curriculum at schools in Malaysia. As a new participant in the space arena and conscious of the limitations of its resources, Malaysia would actively seek international cooperation and collaboration in all aspects of space activity, while at the same time vigorously nurturing its own indigenous capacity in that important area.

37. **Mr. Baissa** (Yemen) said that, although the use of outer space might seem impossible for many developing countries and particularly for the least developed ones, those countries were aware that it would be dangerous to fall behind in that area and to limit themselves to the role of mere observers. In that connection, the United Nations was becoming increasingly important in eliminating the widening gap between developed and developing countries.

38. The militarization of outer space, sometimes unilaterally, was having negative consequences. Attention should be concentrated on the peaceful aspects of the conquest of outer space. In that connection, Yemen welcomed the financial and technical assistance provided

by various States and organizations to developing countries and particularly to the least developed countries, in order to facilitate their participation in the measures currently under discussion. The organization of regional and international conferences, symposia, seminars and workshops was important in that connection. In addition, the establishment on a mutually beneficial basis of regional centres of knowledge in the area of space science and technology facilitated access to specialized knowledge and skilled assistance.

39. Yemen welcomed the success of UNISPACE III and the adoption of conclusions and recommendations at the Conference. Outer space was the common property of mankind and should therefore be utilized by the developing countries, which on the threshold of the third millennium were trying to solve problems of social and economic development and to prevent natural disasters. The establishment of the necessary machinery was important for international cooperation in that area: consultative arrangements within the Committee, as well as a United Nations voluntary fund to implement the conclusions and recommendations of UNISPACE III and of the regional conferences. If the ever-widening gap between developing and developed countries was to be closed, new sources of financing must be sought and international cooperation organized on a multilateral basis.

40. For the developing countries, the conquest of outer space was one of the means of attaining their goals. Of course, that was still a daydream and a long and thorny path remained to be travelled before it could be made a reality. Ingenuity and resourcefulness were required in order to expedite that process. In that connection, a role could be played by literacy campaigns, promotion of education, particularly in rural areas, coordination of educational curricula and establishment of infrastructures for the use of space technology.

41. **Mr. Tarabrin** (Russian Federation) said that his country's space activities promoted Russia's scientific and economic interests, in accordance with national space policy and with the Federation's space programme for the period up to the year 2000, in which an important place was also devoted to international cooperation. The orbital network of spacecraft operated by Russia was carrying out assignments in a range of basic areas, including implementation of international agreements, organization of manned orbital flights and operation of new industrial technology in space, conduct of basic scientific research, creation of global communications and television broadcasting throughout the territory of Russia, and also environmental monitoring and disaster management.

42. With regard to the manned space programme, during the long lifetime of the Mir space station a programme of research and experiments had been implemented covering a broad spectrum of subject fields, with the participation of foreign astronauts under various international programmes. The Russian-American Mir-Shuttle and Mir-NASA joint programmes were important events which, as the first phase of the project to establish the International Space Station, had enabled the partners to acquire invaluable experience in the conduct of joint long-duration flights. As part of the practical arrangements for this project, in November 1998 Russia had launched the first module Zarya. Preparations were currently under way for the launch of another Russian Zvezda module. At the same time, a preliminary expert examination was being conducted and proposals were being selected for a programme of pure and applied research on board the Russian segment of the International Space Station.

43. The launch by Russian carrier rockets of foreign payloads was an important and rapidly developing area of Russia's space activity. One of the most outstanding achievements in the realm of international cooperation had been the construction of a unique marine cosmodrome and the first launching of a satellite from it under the international Sea Launch programme. Russia was trying to make its space activities socially and economically significant and, with that aim, was engaging in the active industrial application of the latest scientific and technical advances in the area of rocket and space technology.

44. The increase in the number of participants in space activities and the extensive commercialization of such activities were radically altering the scale and character of States' activities for the peaceful use of outer space. Accordingly, the work of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space should take into account the new requirements. The international community needed the Committee, buttressed by adequate powers. Not only should the existing status and role of the Committee in the formulation of political and legal principles governing space activities be preserved, but its functions of coordinating and regulating international cooperation in space should be strengthened.

45. UNISPACE III had been a milestone in the development of international cooperation in that sphere. It had reaffirmed the unconditional preservation of the peaceful character of the use of space and the conduct of space activities in the interests of all humankind and of maintaining international peace and security. It had also noted the need to modernize the institutes of international space law existing under the auspices of the United Nations,

in view of the rapid development of entrepreneurial activity in space, so as to strike a balance between commercial motivations and the need to prevent harm in space and to take into account the interests of the world community as a whole.

46. Russia was firmly convinced that the successful development of international cooperation in space on a regional and bilateral basis and its establishment on a long-term legal foundation were no substitute for the progressive development and modification of universal norms and principles of such cooperation. That was currently the important and very timely task of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.

The meeting rose at 11.55 a.m.

United Nations A/C.4/54/SR.16

General Assembly
Fifty-fourth session
Official Records

Distr.: General
13 December 1999
English
Original: Russian

Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

Summary record of the 16th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 29 October 1999, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Zackheos ..... (Cyprus)

Contents

Agenda item 87: International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space (*continued*)

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99-81998 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Agenda item 87: International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space (*continued*) (A/54/20; A/C.4/54/8; A/C.4/54/L.6 and L.7; A/CONF.184/6)

1. **Mr. Al-Anbuge** (Iraq) said that outer space was the common property of humankind and, for that reason, outer space activities must be governed by the principles of protection of the space environment, prohibition of the arms race and compliance with the relevant international legal instruments guaranteeing the use of space exclusively for peaceful purposes.

2. His delegation welcomed the convening of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, which had taken place in Vienna in July 1999, and the adoption of the Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development. The voluminous documentation on international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space that had been submitted to the Conference established the basis for the use of space for the purpose of environmental protection; the rational utilization of natural resources; the promotion of development; education; and the broader application of space technology in the interests of developing countries. His delegation supported the proposal in the Vienna Declaration for the establishment of a special voluntary United Nations trust fund and the recommendation that after a period of five years the General Assembly should review the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III.

3. The international community was making concerted efforts to coordinate outer space activities with the assistance of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS). He was concerned, however, at the efforts of the United States towards the militarization of space, as demonstrated by the NASA document "20/20 Vision", which referred to the prospect of bringing space under United States control and of putting into space laser anti-missile defence weapons. The execution of such a plan would mean violating the 1967 Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies, which stated that the use and exploration of outer space must be carried out for the benefit of all mankind and exclusively for peaceful purposes.

4. Iraq had given humankind one of the most ancient civilizations and had been one of the founders of the United Nations, as well as of many of its organizations and scientific committees. Iraq had played a prominent and effective role in the work of COPUOS. It had begun to implement a large-scale programme on the peaceful uses of space technology, particularly in the fields of remote sensing and all types of communications. However, the sanctions imposed against Iraq on 6 August 1990, which had still to be lifted, had caused enormous losses and had hindered the effective implementation of that programme. They were also preventing Iraqi scholars and specialists in engineering and technology from following the development of space technology and space science, attending specialized international seminars and conferences or undertaking in-depth academic study, and receiving publications, periodicals and essential materials and equipment. Those sanctions were a systematic campaign aimed at depriving an entire people of the opportunity to enjoy the benefits of science, which completely contradicted the spirit and the letter of the Charter of the United Nations and all its principles, including the principle enshrined in the preamble to the Charter of employing international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples. The lifting of the sanctions was not only the moral, ethical and legal duty of the international community, which must save the Iraqi people from isolation and hunger, but would also allow the country's scientific potential to be realized and would enable Iraqi scholars to participate along with their colleagues throughout the world in building a better world for the whole of humankind.

5. **Mr. Kára** (Czech Republic) said that the Czech Republic had a long tradition of outer space activities, in particular astronomy, geophysics and other space-related fields. Major achievements included the launching of a series of microsatellites, MAGION 1-5, the last of which had been sent into orbit in 1996. Currently, a new satellite was under construction. The Czech Republic was participating in the European Space Agency's INTEGRAL Project and in the building of a new hard x-ray spectrometer together with the United States National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. In recent years, the application of remote sensing had expanded to include monitoring and assessment of natural disasters. The conclusion of the Agreement on Cooperation with the European Space Agency (ESA) had contributed to closer cooperation between the Czech Republic and other European countries. Currently, the Czech Republic was in the process of joining the ESA PRODEX Programme.

6. UNISPACE III, which had taken place in Vienna from 19 to 30 July 1999, and the exhibition of space science and technology organized in parallel with that event, had given the participants an opportunity to evaluate the current state of international cooperation in the exploration and peaceful

uses of outer space and to consider ways and means of further developing the respective programmes and strategies with which humankind would enter the twenty-first century. The Vienna Declaration adopted at the Conference, which took into account the recommendations of the regional conferences and the Technical Forum, to which his country fully subscribed, was of the utmost importance.

7. As for the future work of COPUOS and its two Subcommittees, particular attention should be devoted to stepping up accessions to the space treaties adopted under United Nations auspices. He therefore welcomed the current review of the status of the existing international legal instruments that was being conducted by the Legal Subcommittee and could not only encourage the acceptance of those treaties by additional States and international organizations, but also lead to the identification of new problems and the convening of negotiations on new agreements.

8. One of the major problems, which had become particularly acute in recent years, was the sharp increase in the number of objects in space that had ceased to fulfil their useful function and posed a certain threat to active satellites, services provided from space, and to the lives and safety of astronauts. He was referring to space debris, which currently constituted more than 90 per cent of all traceable objects. That issue was not dealt with in United Nations space treaties, which did not even specify whether space debris should enjoy legal protection, or, in other words, whether space debris should be considered as valuable property of the launching State. He therefore appreciated the work of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee on the problem of space debris and, in particular, the technical report, which constituted a sound basis for future work by COPUOS in that area.

9. **Mr. Tekaya** (Tunisia) said that Tunisia attached great importance to the work of COPUOS. The third Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space had been an historic event. Representatives of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and scientific institutions in the field of outer space participating in the conference had had an opportunity to exchange views and make constructive proposals on ways and means to strengthen the regime for the peaceful uses of outer space, develop international cooperation and increase the potential of States, especially developing countries, to use scientific achievements to promote the development process. The Vienna Declaration stressed the important role of space science in solving the problems of sustainable development and underlined the significance of expanded international cooperation in space exploration. His delegation welcomed the outcome of that important Conference and believed that its practical implementation would have key significance.

10. Science and technology played a central role in the development process. Ever since its independence, Tunisia had attached enormous significance to the human dimension, which was one of the main focuses of development activities. Education, science and technology were priority areas that would enable a qualitatively new level to be reached in solving important problems. In that connection, Tunisia was taking steps to strengthen national capacity in the exploration and peaceful use of outer space based on a wide-ranging plan to establish a scientific and technical basis for the use of space science and technology for the good of society. Therefore, governmental organizations and relevant institutes should strive to introduce new technologies and projects in different spheres, for instance monitoring of natural resources, forestry and agriculture, marine resources, desertification, water usage and biological research, ecological monitoring of the state of land and marine environment and telecommunications. A national network had been established in Tunisia for the collection and exchange of data to be used for monitoring of natural resources agricultural work. Several scientific research groups had also been established for the use of digital imaging, in addition to the National Outer Space Commission and the National Remote Sensing Centre.

11. Tunisia considered it necessary to provide equal access to outer space for all nations and peoples with a view to its peaceful use for the good of all humanity. At the same time, there was a gap between developing and developed countries in the area of space technology. The latter were not in a position to utilize the achievements of space science and technology to promote their social, economic and cultural development. Thus, international cooperation for the purpose of strengthening the capacity of developing countries in the area of the exploration and peaceful uses of outer space was very important. Towards that goal, the exchange of information and experience must be improved through seminars, workshops and conferences. Tunisia was interested in the implementation of the project to establish an information network linking scientists, educators, professionals and decision makers in Africa. The international community, through international cooperation and application of the principles of solidarity, could ensure the utilization of scientific resources in the interests of humanity and lay the foundations for sustainable development and universal prosperity.

12. **Mr. Macedo** (Mexico) said that the Mexican delegation fully endorsed the principles contained in the Vienna Declaration, especially those concerning the need

to prevent an arms race in outer space. Mexico attached great importance to the preservation of outer space without any types of weapons and offensive and defensive systems. Space technology should be used in the interests of all countries. In that connection, it was necessary to promote the exchange of technological resources, which would allow the world to benefit from space exploration. Despite the successes achieved in the area of international cooperation, there was still a serious imbalance in the utilization of the advantages of technology related to space exploration. The gap which still separated developed and developing countries must be closed.

13. The United Nations played an important role in encouraging the development of international space law by elaborating general principles and conclusions with the binding force of legal instruments. The strengthening of the regime for the use of outer space in various conditions established legal limits and guaranteed the use of outer space exclusively for peaceful purposes in the interests of all States. Mexico supported all efforts for the codification of international law with the objective of regulating space activities and utilization of space resources. At the initiative of Mexico, the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space had included on the agenda of its Legal Subcommittee the question of the review of the status of the five international legal instruments governing outer space. That initiative had been intended to ensure the universality of space law by promoting greater adherence by States to the existing international agreements and conventions.

14. Since 1985, Mexico had launched five satellites into space, which were carrying out a wide range of activities for peaceful purposes in such areas as telecommunications, medicine, meteorology, prevention of natural disasters and mitigation of their consequences, and also providing mobile services to support institutions dealing with matters of national security.

15. As for the legal regime regulating access to the geostationary orbit, Mexico continued to believe that the norms to be elaborated should guarantee equal access by all States, especially developing ones, to that limited resource.

16. **Mr. Apunte** (Ecuador) said that the evolution of space exploration was evidence of the importance which should be attached to the appropriate utilization of outer space. The benefits of space exploration should not be available only to those countries which possessed advanced technology; international cooperation in that area was required, first of all to meet the requirements of developing countries, since the appropriate use of outer space could open broad possibilities for ensuring the sustainable economic development of all countries.

17. Implementation of the strategy adopted at UNISPACE III would permit rapid progress in the rational use of natural resources and would facilitate economic and social development for future generations. He especially emphasized the assistance that could be provided through the use of space technology, especially remote sensing and prevention of natural disasters and mitigation of their consequences. In 1998 Ecuador had become one of the main victims of the El Niño phenomenon, an area where space science could have played a very important role. In that connection, Ecuador planned to establish an international centre for the study of that natural phenomenon, for which it required support from the international community. The ground receiving station at Cotopaxi, Ecuador, and the Centre for Integrated Surveying of Natural Resources (CLIRSEN) implemented such activities for the 25 countries of Latin America and the Caribbean Basin lying within its range. The Centre regularly organized educational courses and seminars for national and foreign specialists in various areas of space research. The efforts made within the framework of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications were of the greatest significance. Ecuador highly valued the seminars and informational courses organized in that area, which were a valuable instrument for the exchange of information and professional training for specialists.

18. Ecuador underlined the need for the establishment of a legal regime regulating equal access to the geostationary orbit, as it was a limited natural resource. Therefore, the question of its use should be decided taking into account the right of access of all States, with special attention being paid to developing countries.

19. **Mr. Lamdan** (Israel) said that on the threshold of the new millennium, Israel was endeavouring to take an active part in the exploitation and use of outer space for peaceful purposes. His country, which was following the work of COPUOS with interest, had played an active role in the UNISPACE III Conference in Vienna and had welcomed the Declaration it had adopted. The report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (A/54/20) provided a reliable basis for further consideration of problems related to the exploitation of space.

20. The Israel Space Agency had been established as early as 1983. It had been assigned the task of promoting various space-related activities in Israel, including the building of an infrastructure geared towards achieving optimal economic and commercial results by making use of the country's

technological advances in selected niches, notably in the use of small satellites and remote sensing. In 1988 Israel had officially entered the space age with the launch of the first OFEQ satellite. In 1996, the Israeli AMOS geostationary satellite had been successfully launched on a European Ariane-4 launcher. It had subsequently served to extend international cooperation with a view to the establishment of the EROS (Earth Remote Observation System) satellite system. The first of eight EROS satellites was scheduled for launch at the end of 2000.

21. In the sphere of remote sensing, Israeli organizations had developed a number of applications, including: automatic generation of digital elevation models; mapping of geology, geomorphology and associated seismic activities; remote sensing of vegetation cover to assess soil and land-use effectiveness, for example for soil salination forecasting; measurement of soil moisture by synthetic aperture radar in the Negev desert region; the establishment of a national database for digital satellite images; and the establishment of a Global Positioning System (GPS) infrastructure in Israel.

22. Israel was also carrying out a number of collaborative projects, including the launching of a microsatellite in cooperation with Ukraine; placing the TAUVEX telescope into orbit in cooperation with the Russian Federation; joint experiments carried out with the use of a Netherlands satellite; funding, together with the French space agency and NASA, of the development of an electrical thruster and of a small laboratory to test survivability of components and subsystems in environmentally hostile space conditions; a feasibility study conducted jointly with a German company on the development of the "David" small commercial remote-sensing satellite; and the preparation, with Mediterranean countries, of a Mediterranean/Israeli Dust Experiment (MEIDEX), to be carried on a NASA launch vehicle.

23. **Mr. Islam** (Pakistan) said that, although in the previous half century scientists and researchers had discovered some of the benefits of the exploitation of outer space, the horizon of knowledge about the hidden wealth of space was expected to broaden enormously in the next century. UNISPACE III had been an historic event which had made it possible to take stock of the cooperation among Member States in the exploration and peaceful uses of outer space. The successful organization of the Conference reflected the participants' determination to promote better understanding and cooperation in such an important sphere under the auspices of the United Nations. The Vienna Declaration adopted at the Conference laid emphasis on promoting effective means of using space technology to assist in the solution of problems of regional or global significance. As the nucleus of a strategy to address problems in the new millennium, the Declaration identified such measures as protecting the Earth's environment and managing its resources; using space technology for human security, development and welfare; advancing scientific knowledge of space and protecting the space environment; enhancing education and training opportunities and ensuring public awareness; strengthening and repositioning space activities in the United Nations system; and promoting international cooperation.

24. To ensure the effective implementation of the Vienna Declaration, a number of landmark decisions had been taken, including the establishment of a special voluntary fund; the evaluation in 2004 by the General Assembly of the implementation of the recommendations; strengthening of the Committee's ability to take follow-up actions, including expanded activities of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications; and annual observance of a world space week, so as to assess the contributions of space science and technology towards the betterment of the human condition. He noted that in the past year, the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee had made a substantial contribution with regard to the development of the concept of the measurement of space debris, the modelling of the space debris environment and the assessment of related risks, and the development of mitigation measures. Similarly, the Legal Sub-Committee had achieved progress towards reviewing the status of the five international legal instruments governing outer space. Efforts must continue to formulate an acceptable definition and delimitation of outer space and of the nature and use of the geostationary orbit.

25. Space technology produced significant benefits in many fields, and they must be accessible to all Member States, including the developing countries. In past years, Pakistan had achieved considerable progress in the development of space science and technology, including the design, assembly/fabrication and launching of sounding rockets for upper-atmospheric research, light-weight satellites in low Earth orbit, and geosynchronous communications satellites; the application of satellite remote sensing data and Geographic Information System technology for the surveying of natural resources; the development of satellite tracking, telemetry and telecommand facilities; and the establishment and operation of ground receiving stations for data acquisition from various satellites.

26. Pakistan remained concerned that outer space was under the threat of being transformed into yet another arena of military competition. Attempts to militarize space by pursuing narrow interests aimed at achieving global

domination could lead to a new turn in strategic confrontation among the major Powers. It would thus be necessary to conclude a comprehensive convention to prevent an arms race in outer space. Meanwhile, faithful implementation of the existing agreements on the peaceful uses of space science and technology should be sincerely promoted.

27. **Mr. Semenenko** (Ukraine) said that one of the positive current trends was that an increasing number of countries, including developing countries, were using space science and technology on a broader scale to improve the standard of living of their people. In that respect, the role of international organizations, and especially that of COPUOS, which enjoyed Ukraine's firm support, could hardly be overestimated. His delegation also welcomed the Vienna Declaration adopted at the UNISPACE III Conference, which was an important contribution to the development of international cooperation in the conquest of space. He drew attention to the proposal put forward at the Conference by his delegation for a "Space Patrol" global warning system project, and invited all Member States to take part in the implementation of that project.

28. The Government of Ukraine gave high priority to the development of the national aerospace industries. Ukraine currently had a highly developed industrial, scientific and engineering infrastructure for space research, with such renowned institutions as the Pivdenmashzavod Production Association in Dnepropetrovsk, the Institute for Space Research and the Paton Electric Welding Institute in Kiev and the Long Range Space Communications Centre in Evpatoria. The country's policy as far as the peaceful uses of space were concerned was aimed at preserving and strengthening the scientific schools and scientific and engineering capabilities of the aerospace industry. Special attention was also paid to the vocational training of a new generation of designers of space systems and researchers in the leading educational centres of Kiev, Kharkov and Dnepropetrovsk.

29. Ukraine had some unique and significant achievements to its credits in different spheres of space science and technology which could be used in international space activities. Those areas included decametric radio astromony; the study of comets and meteorites and star formation processes; the influence of microgravity on cell metabolism and living organisms; research into microgravitational physics; aerospace environmental monitoring; and space transport systems. The participation of Ukraine in a number of joint international space projects in recent years demonstrated that the country had the necessary elements to promote such cooperation on a broader scale. The conversion of military facilities was continuing, and SS-18 missiles which were to have been eliminated under the provisions of the START Treaty were being used to produce Zenith boosters capable of launching twice as much payload at a lower cost.

30. **Mr. Maulion** (Philippines) said that the achievements of the earlier UNISPACE conferences, such as the creation of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications and the establishment of the regional centres for space science and technology, were insufficient for developing the technology and meeting the needs of those who would benefit most from such technology. The task was to ensure that the services of the United Nations system and international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space were used for the good of all humanity.

31. The Philippines hoped that Member States would respond to the call to support the special United Nations voluntary fund for implementation of the recommendations of the Conference. In view of the increasing commercialization of outer space, financing at the international level and from the private sector should also offer appropriate possibilities.

32. The Philippines was in favour of expanding cooperation in meteorological satellite applications for the enhancement of weather and climate forecasting. The same applied to the establishment of an integrated global system for natural disaster mitigation and relief and prevention. The current activities in space science and technology applications in the Philippines were a direct result of the Regional Space Applications Programme for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific (RESAP). But much remained to be done by way of making full use of the existing mechanisms of regional and international cooperation. The Philippines therefore fully supported the recommendation of the Kuala Lumpur regional preparatory conference for Asia and the Pacific that the coordination between the United Nations Programme on Space Applications and RESAP should be further strengthened.

33. **Mr. Tasovski** (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) said that his delegation acknowledged the important work done by COPUOS, with whose assistance the international community had coordinated United Nations policies for the peaceful exploration of outer space for nearly four decades. In 1999 COPUOS had successfully organized and conducted UNISPACE III, where the very important Vienna Declaration had been adopted.

34. His delegation subscribed to the statement made at an earlier meeting by the representative of Finland on behalf of the countries members of the European Union and

associated countries and it wished to draw attention to some of Macedonia's basic policies for the development of outer space activities. It was important actively to pursue international space cooperation, to strive to apply the results of space developments in all parts of society, to try adequately to address the issue of space debris and to preserve the environment in space, and to support the establishment of a network of space science and technology education and research institutions in Central, Eastern and South-eastern Europe. It hoped that the goals of the Vienna Declaration relating to the further improvement of international cooperation would be achieved.

35. **Mr. Hodgkins** (United States of America), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that his delegation categorically rejected the proposition voiced by Iraq that the United States was in some way violating or about to violate its international obligations under bilateral or multilateral agreements. The United States carried out its space programme in full accordance with the space treaties and the Charter of the United Nations.

The meeting was suspended at 11.35 a.m. and resumed at 12.20 p.m.

Draft resolutions A/C.4/54/L.6 and L.7

36. **The Chairman** suggested that the Committee should make an exception to rule 120 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly and take decisions on the two draft resolutions, although they had only just been circulated at the meeting.

37. *It was so decided.*

38. **Mr. Rao** (India), speaking on behalf of the Working Group of the Whole on International Cooperation in the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, introduced the two draft resolutions and said that draft resolution A/C.4/54/L.6 was basically the same as the previous year's resolution on the item but contained a few changes. The preamble included two additional paragraphs on the successful holding of UNISPACE III and the adoption of the Vienna Declaration. Operative paragraphs 4 to 7, 15 and 16 reflected the agreement reached by the Committee in 1999 concerning a new approach to composing the agendas of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and the Legal Subcommittee. Issues relating to space debris and decisions concerning the work of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee were dealt with in paragraphs 12 to 14 and 20. Recent developments affecting the regional centres for space science and technology education were reflected in paragraphs 22 and 23. After a lengthy debate the Committee had decided to include paragraph 28, concerning the interest of some developing countries in becoming members of the Committee. There was a minor typographical error in paragraph 28 of the French text, and the agreement reached by the Committee on the dates of its next session in 2000 had been inaccurately recorded in the report of the Committee on the work of its forty-second session, which was mentioned in paragraph 1. Subject to those comments the text of the draft resolution had been approved by the members of the Working Group by consensus.

39. Draft resolution A/C.4/54/L.7 was devoted to the results of UNISPACE III and was similar in format to previous resolutions on the results of other United Nations conferences. Operative paragraphs 1 to 10 and 16 reflected decisions relating to the recommendations of UNISPACE III, as well as dealing with the conclusions contained in the Vienna Declaration. Some of the paragraphs contained typographical errors which would have to be corrected. For example, in the Arabic version of paragraph 9 "voluntarily" should be inserted after "to contribute". And in paragraph 10 the words "special voluntary fund" should be replaced by "Trust Fund". Paragraph 11 dealt with the measures which the Office for Outer Space Affairs would have to take to implement the recommendations of UNISPACE III. In paragraphs 12 and 15 the Secretary-General was requested to ensure the widespread dissemination of the results of UNISPACE III and to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session on the implementation of the Conference's recommendations. Subject to those comments draft resolution L.7 had also been approved by the members of the Working Group by consensus. He suggested that in accordance with the established practice the two draft resolutions should be adopted without a vote.

40. **The Chairman** said that he understood that it was being suggested that he should write a letter to the Secretariat correcting the dates of the next session of the Committee to bring them into line with the original agreement. If there was no objection, he would proceed accordingly.

41. *It was so decided.*

42. **The Chairman** invited the Committee to make general comments before proceeding to take decisions on the draft resolutions.

43. **Mr. Cassapoglu** (Greece) and **Mr. Tekaya** (Tunisia) drew attention to typographical errors in the French text of the draft resolutions.

44. **The Chairman** said that the Secretariat would note the corrections and he suggested that, if there was no objection, draft resolutions A/C.4/54/L.6 and L.7, as orally amended, should be adopted without a vote.

45. *Draft resolutions A/C.5/54/L.6 and L.7 were adopted without a vote.*

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.

United Nations A/C.4/54.SR.17

General Assembly
Fifty-fourth session

Official Records

Distr.: General
15 November 1999

Original: English

Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

Summary record of the 17th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 2 November 1999, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Zackheos ..... (Cyprus)

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99-82085 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Expression of sympathy in connection with the recent cyclone in India and the recent crash of an Egyptian aircraft

1. *At the invitation of the Chairman, the members of the Committee observed a minute of silence as an expression of sympathy for the recent disasters which had struck India and Egypt.*

2. **Mr. Zaki** (Egypt) expressed appreciation for the Committee's sympathy.

Agenda item 88: United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (A/54/13 and Add.1, 338, 345, 376, 377, 385 and 477)

3. **Mr. Hansen** (Commissioner-General, United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)), introducing his annual report to the General Assembly (A/54/13 and Add.1), which covered the period from July 1998 through June 1999, regretted that the approaching fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of UNRWA found the Agency still providing services to the third and fourth generation of Palestine refugees, currently numbering 3.6 million. The Agency planned to observe that sobering occasion appropriately, with information activities and displays of commemorative art works by refugees. The annual Pledging Conference had been scheduled on the anniversary date of the adoption of resolution 302 (IV) creating UNRWA, and he looked forward to continued strong support for the Agency's operations.

4. The renewal of the peace process and the more vigorous pursuit of final status issues, including the refugee issue, had naturally had a direct impact on both the Agency and the refugees it served. UNRWA itself was not in any way involved in the peace negotiations, but all parties recognized that it was vital to the process in that it was a source of social and economic well-being for the refugees and thus contributed to the necessary stability in the region.

5. The refugee communities remained poor and underserved because of inadequate financing for UNRWA, rising costs and limited domestic economic growth. The poorest refugees could barely cope with the basic needs of life.

6. With 1.5 million registered Palestine refugees — approximately 35 per cent of its total population — Jordan continued to host the largest number. They, however, benefited from a supportive official environment, enjoying full citizenship and access to government services and development assistance. In Lebanon, the employment restrictions imposed on non-Lebanese, the high cost of private services and the financial problems of UNRWA made the 370,000 Palestine refugees registered there the most disadvantaged of all. The 1997 Lebanon appeal funds were almost exhausted, and the extreme needs of the refugees in Lebanon had to be dealt with in the context of the renewed peace negotiations. In the West Bank, the situation of some 570,000 registered refugees had remained tense, with intermittent clashes between Palestinians and Israeli settlers. Citing security concerns, the Israeli authorities has imposed temporary closures and curfews, albeit fewer than in the previous reporting period, preventing Palestinians from working in Israel, and had imposed cumbersome entry and exit procedures that affected the mobility of UNRWA staff and goods. In the Gaza Strip, an estimated 40 per cent of the 800,000 registered refugees — 78 per cent of the population — lived in poverty. The Agency's successful income-generation and job-creation programme was reaching the most disadvantaged sections of society, including women. With repayment rates exceeding 95 per cent, the programme had moved from being donor-funded to being self-supporting, and had expanded.

7. Chairman Arafat, who had reiterated his appreciation for the work of UNRWA, had promised to point out to donors that funds for the Palestinian Authority could not cover UNRWA services, especially for the 60 per cent of registered Palestine refugees living outside the West Bank and Gaza. He had also promised to find a solution for the huge amount owed by the Palestinian Authority to UNRWA since 1995. UNRWA was squeezed between refugee needs and the cash shortage caused by unpaid liabilities of over $37 million, almost $21 million of which were owed by the Authority.

8. The welcome opening in October of the southern safe-passage route between Gaza and the West Bank should create vital economic, commercial and cultural links and, once it became routine, should lessen the sense of isolation in Gaza. Students from Gaza, for instance, would now be able to attend the Agency's training centres in the West Bank, and travel should be eased for UNRWA Palestinian staff.

9. The Agency's finances, described in the report and its addendum, continued to face a serious cash flow problem despite a budget surplus of some $5.6 million. It had been forced temporarily to use its income-generation and job-creation programme to meet the September payroll, and was still $5 million short for the December payroll, despite a special contribution by donors. Clearly that was no way to run an agency of that size and importance.

10. The 2000-2001 budget had undergone a major overhaul and the new format, reflecting a programme-driven budget, had been well received by both donors and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ). The budget was different in two major respects: all UNRWA units had been involved in its preparation on the basis of planning assumptions; and the outcome had been an integrated, forward-looking document that reflected the cost of activities more accurately and the various categories more logically and was more directly linked to programme plans. The new budget format had allowed UNRWA finally to rethink the austerity measures introduced in 1993 and to reinstate some of the affected services as part of the regular budget or as projects. ACABQ had suggested that a way should be found to increase the direct support that UNRWA received from the United Nations regular budget, and he would be making some specific proposals to the Secretary-General in that regard.

11. The budget reform had been undertaken as part of the ongoing management reform, which also included systems reform. The new rules governing some 22,000 Area staff would in the long term achieve cost rationalization. UNRWA was still attempting to improve its strategic planning; a start had been made with the establishment of a policy analysis unit a year earlier, which had taken the lead in creating the new budget format.

12. He drew attention to the results of the investigation conducted at his request by the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) into the allegations of corruption and financial impropriety levelled against UNRWA operations in Lebanon. The OIOS report (A/54/367) had once and for all laid the charges to rest, having disproved them or found them unsubstantiated. The OIOS team had made some useful recommendations, some of which had already been acted upon, and UNRWA would of course remain vigilant.

13. **Mr. Brattskar** (Norway), speaking as Rapporteur of the Working Group on the Financing of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, introduced the Group's report (A/54/477). The Working Group had followed with concern the difficulties experienced by the Agency, in particular its serious financial situation. In 1998 UNRWA had had a budget deficit which it had had to cover out of working capital. In September 1999, the Agency had been obliged to use funds from its income-generation programme to meet the payroll and a similar situation was predicted for December unless the Agency received additional income. The Commissioner-General had therefore ordered the continuation of austerity measures introduced in previous years.

14. The Commissioner-General had made every effort to keep donors apprised of the Agency's financial situation and, after consultations, contributions had been pledged to help the Agency with its cash flow problem. However, in order to ensure a reliable and sustainable flow of funds, the Agency had appealed to donors to make payments of pledges earlier and on time. In 1999 the Agency had adopted a new, more transparent budgeting methodology for 2000-2001 and it was hoped that the new approach, aimed at enhancing the budget's usefulness as a planning, management and fund-raising tool, would result in increased donor resources being made available.

15. The Working Group was deeply concerned that seven years of austerity measures had seriously eroded the quality of the services provided by the Agency and stressed the responsibility of the international community to maintain acceptable levels of service. The Group commended the Commissioner-General and his staff on their efforts to eliminate the structural deficit, maintain basic operations despite constraints, increase fundraising and keep major donors and host authorities informed and involved. Any additional austerity cuts would cause severe hardship to an already suffering refugee population and place an increased burden on the host authorities.

16. He therefore urged all Governments to bear those circumstances in mind when deciding their level of contributions to the Agency for 2000 and once again urged Governments to begin contributing or increase contributions, to contribute in a timely manner and, in addition to funding special, emergency or capital projects, to consider making special contributions to cover the deficit and build up working capital so that UNRWA could maintain its regular programmes.

17. **Ms. Nasser** (Observer for Palestine) said that it would have been inconceivable in 1948 that, after more than five decades, the Palestine refugees would continue to languish in refugee camps dispersed throughout the Occupied Territory and the Middle East, denied their right of return and the redressing of their tragic plight by Israeli intransigence and non-compliance. The item under consideration addressed not only the tireless and invaluable work of UNRWA over the past 50 years but also the conditions and fate of the 3.6 million Palestine refugees. It was therefore imperative to reaffirm basic and constant principles, such as the refugees' right of return and right of compensation for property abandoned, lost or damaged. The inalienable individual right of the Palestine refugees to their homes and their property should not be confused with the right of displaced persons to return to the territory occupied by Israel since 1967, which should already have been

effected during the transitional period of the peace process. Furthermore, that right should itself not be confused with the right of every Palestinian to come to the Palestinian State and become a Palestinian citizen.

18. Since its establishment, UNRWA had played a crucial role in halting the deterioration of the situation and providing essential relief, health care, education and social services. The Agency's severe financial difficulties were of deep concern, and the widening gulf between resources and needs had both short-term and potentially grave long-term consequences. As a result, austerity measures remained in place and the level of services had been reduced, exacerbating the already heavy burdens of refugee families, who discerned political implications in the lack of international interest. Until a definitive solution to the refugee problem was reached, it was vital for UNRWA to continue working in all fields of operation at a level that met the humanitarian needs of the refugees. Allowing the financial crisis to be the primary determinant of the Agency's work was unfair to the refugees and unfair to UNRWA.

19. The countless daily obstacles encountered by the Palestinian people and the socio-economic hardships of the refugee population in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, created despair and frustration. Unfortunately, UNRWA operations continued to be obstructed by measures imposed by the Israeli authorities, affecting the provision of services to the refugees. The Agency should be allowed to carry out its mandate without constraints. It was also regrettable that the Commissioner-General's valuable, comprehensive report had, despite its early submission, been subject to unnecessary delays that did not foster constructive debate among delegations.

20. UNRWA and its donors and the host Governments had the gratitude of the Palestinian refugees as they awaited the just resolution of their plight.

21. **Mr. Abu-Nimah** (Jordan) affirmed his Government's support for UNRWA, which was continuing to provide essential services for Palestinian refugees under the experienced and able guidance of its Commissioner-General. He commended the Secretary-General of the United Nations for his sustained support for the Agency.

22. Just as the Palestinian issue was at the heart of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the question of the Palestinian refugees was central to the future of the peace arrangements that would follow the conclusion of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace based on the relevant international resolutions and in particular General Assembly resolution 194 (III), which clearly affirmed the right of the Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and to be paid compensation for loss of property. If the problem of the refugees, whose rights had been affirmed in article 9 of the Jordan-Israel Treaty of Peace, were to remain unsolved, the region would continue to be tense and unstable.

23. Over the last 50 years, Jordan had shouldered a far greater share of the burden represented by the Palestinian refugees than had any other party, placing enormous pressures on its resources and economy. Every cut-back in the services provided by UNRWA had increased the burden on Jordan. In 1998, direct government expenditure on the provision of services to refugees had been 4.75 times greater than the amount spent by UNRWA on such services. His country urged the international community to reject any reduction in the role of UNRWA until such time as the refugee problem had been settled in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions. It also urged donor countries to continue to provide support to UNRWA and enable it to continue to meet its responsibilities. As long as the problem that had led to the establishment of the Agency remained unsolved, its services would continue to be essential. The Agency had suffered a budget deficit since 1993 which currently stood at $67.1 million. The quality and level of service to the refugees was negatively affected by such a deficit, and the Agency was no longer able to provide basic educational, health and social services. Continued support for UNRWA was tantamount to support for the peace process. Any reduction in Agency services would therefore adversely affect the peace process. The services provided by the Agency were basic humanitarian services of the highest priority. They could not be reduced, particularly in view of the continual increase in the refugee population. While Agency personnel were commendably conscientious in carrying out their humanitarian responsibilities, they were constantly hampered by the restrictions imposed on them by the occupying Power. He urged Israel to halt such restrictions.

24. **Ms. Silfverberg** (Finland) spoke on behalf of the European Union. The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and the associated countries Cyprus and Malta aligned themselves with her statement.

25. UNRWA had made a tremendous contribution to the living conditions of the refugees and to social stability in the area, supplying essential services, physical infrastructure and vocational training. She noted especially the developmental social services for women, youth and persons with disabilities as well as the income-generation programme in

support of micro and small enterprises and the infrastructure and other activities carried out under its Peace Implementation Programme (PIP) and the Lebanon Appeal.

26. The European Union was concerned by the difficult financial situation which UNRWA continued to face despite measures to reduce expenditure but was pleased to note that the Agency had implemented reforms and restructuring in order to fulfil its programme goals in a more sustainable and cost-effective manner. The new unified budget structure for the biennium 2000-2001 would significantly improve budgetary transparency. She encouraged the Commissioner-General to continue efforts towards increased transparency and cost-effectiveness through new approaches to traditional activities while at the same time maintaining the quality of services. In that context, she welcomed the consultative process between the Agency, host Governments, the Palestinian Authority and donors in the area of management reforms.

27. The European Union remained the Agency's largest donor, providing assistance for education, health, relief and social programmes and would contribute approximately 120 million Euros in 1999 to 2001, in addition to the contributions made by individual member States and financial support provided by the European Commission for specific projects. Financial pledges made in 1999 and 2000 should cover all budget requirements for the year 2000 and she urged all States, in particular the wealthy States in the region, to increase their contributions.

28. It was to be hoped that a political solution would soon be found as part of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the area so as to conclude the Agency's mandate and transfer its functions to the Palestinian Authority. In that context, the Union welcomed the signing on 4 September of the Sharm el-Sheikh agreement which had opened the door to the resumption of negotiations on permanent status. The European Union remained committed to the Middle East peace process, would continue to play its full part and called on the international community to provide UNRWA with resources adequate to fulfil its mandate until such time as a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement had been found to the political problems which had led to the presence of Palestinian refugees in the Near East.

29. **Mr. Yoshikawa** (Japan) paid a tribute to UNRWA and its staff. Their work was vitally important and, despite severely limited resources, by improving the socio-economic conditions of the Palestinian refugees, they had strengthened the foundation for peace and contributed to regional stability. He also commended the neighbouring countries, in particular Jordan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Lebanon, which had extended assistance to so many Palestinian refugees despite their own economic difficulties.

30. He welcomed the signing of the Sharm el-Sheikh Memorandum, which should further strengthen trust between the parties and accelerate negotiations. He looked forward to a positive outcome of the meetings currently being held in Oslo among the leaders of the relevant parties and emphasized that the international community had a collective responsibility to support the parties concerned and to promote the Middle East peace process. In that context, his delegation hoped that the meeting of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee held in Tokyo in October 1999 had given renewed impetus to the peace process.

31. Noting the Agency's critical financial situation as described in the report of the Commissioner-General (A/54/13), he urged Member States to support the Agency so that it could continue to implement its important mandate but also encouraged UNRWA to make further efforts to enhance the visibility of its activities since the ability of Governments to provide assistance depended to a large extent on public support. Given the difficult financial situations faced by many Member States, however, he called on UNRWA to explore creative measures to alleviate its financial difficulties through alternative sources of income such as contributions from the private sector and expanded joint programmes with international organizations.

32. Japan continued to maintain close contact with the Agency and, despite financial difficulties in recent years, had been and would continue to be one of the Agency's largest donors.

33. Convinced that human resources development was the foundation of economic and social development, the Japan International Cooperation Agency offered a fellowship programme for vocational training in Japan which, since the beginning of the programme in 1985, had awarded more than 160 fellowships while 21 Japanese experts had provided vocational training at UNRWA training centres. Hundreds of Palestinian refugee students had also benefited from the UNRWA university scholarship programme, to which Japan had contributed over US$ 6 million. The report of the Secretary-General on Offers by Member States of grants and scholarships for higher education, including vocational training for Palestine refugees (A/54/376) provided detailed information on those efforts.

34. **Mr. Brattskar** (Norway) noted the invaluable role played by UNRWA in providing assistance to the Palestinian refugees since the beginning of the peace process in 1993. Norway would therefore continue to be one of the major contributors. He expressed concern at the Agency's difficult

financial situation as described in the report of the Commissioner-General (A/54/13). As UNRWA approached its fiftieth anniversary, it was essential that the donor community maintain and even expand its support. A healthy financial situation for the Agency was of vital importance to the refugee population and their host countries as well as to the peace process. He was pleased to note that the OIOS report on allegations of corruption in Lebanon (A/54/367) had been distributed to donors and that UNRWA had made efforts to improve routines and become more transparent.

35. The peace process was at a critical but constructive stage, with meetings currently being held in Oslo between the parties, in the presence of President Clinton. He reiterated his delegation's conviction that political support by the international community must be accompanied by substantial economic assistance, in particular to the Palestinian people. UNRWA played a vital role in that context and it was the joint responsibility of the international community to enable the Agency to carry out the tasks that the General Assembly had assigned to it.

36. **Mr. Najem** (Lebanon) said that the question of the Palestinian refugees was no closer to being resolved after more than 40 years, because of the repressive practices of the Israeli authorities in the occupied territories and their consistent disregard for international resolutions and conventions. Israel also continued to carry out unjustified attacks on Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon and had occupied southern Lebanon since 1978. It refused to respond to the wishes of the international community by implementing Security Council resolution 425 (1978), which called on Israel to withdraw its forces from all Lebanese territory.

37. There were currently more than 359,000 registered Palestinian refugees living in Lebanon. His country was therefore well aware of the importance of the role played by UNRWA. He reaffirmed the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people and its right to establish an independent State, and the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force, while stressing that Lebanon categorically rejected the permanent settlement of any Palestinian refugees in its territory. In its provision of services to the large number of refugees to which it was host, Lebanon was constrained by its poor economic situation caused by 15 years of war. The international community had a responsibility to compel Israel to implement the relevant international resolutions, and all donor countries must continue to contribute to UNRWA. If representatives of donor countries were to visit the refugee camps, the urgent humanitarian needs of the Palestinian refugees and their daily struggle for survival would become clear. UNRWA must be able to continue to provide satisfactory services to the more than 3 million Palestinian refugees who were dependent on it. The tragedy that had led to the establishment of UNRWA continued to pose a threat to the security and stability of the region and to restrict development potential, and there was growing concern in the region about the true reasons for the reduction in financial contributions to UNRWA by some donor countries. There were also dark suspicions regarding the settlement of Palestinian refugees in host countries. The only way to allay such suspicions was to increase contributions to UNRWA and ensure that United Nations resolutions concerning Palestinian refugees were implemented. Lebanon would continue to insist that the presence of the Palestinian refugees on its territory was only temporary: the national Constitution provided that no kind of settlement of such refugees could be contemplated on its territory.

38. **Mr. Ortique** (United States of America) reiterated his delegation's strong support for UNRWA, its reform efforts and the peace process. UNRWA continued to play an important humanitarian role in the lives of Palestinian refugees, especially with respect to their educational and health needs. As UNRWA's largest donor, his delegation supported reform efforts aimed at resolving its financial difficulties and suggested that its cash flow problems and deficit would be best resolved within the context of a broad fiscal reform package and the development of a strategic vision and management plan for its future. He therefore supported UNRWA's more open dialogue with its major supporters as well as its efforts to expand its donor base.

39. He took note of the Committee's concern for the welfare of the Palestinian community and highlighted the need for positive and constructive resolutions. His delegation could not, however, support unbalanced resolutions which attempted to prejudge the outcome of negotiations; lasting peace would come from agreements reached among the parties themselves, not from any action taken by the Committee. He therefore urged colleagues to support both UNRWA's commitment to reform and the region's commitment to peace.

40. **Mr. Zaki** (Egypt) pointed out that the Palestinian refugee crisis was the oldest case of refugees in the world and UNRWA had been providing relief, work and education for Palestinian refugees for 50 years, playing a pivotal role in preventing an escalation of the humanitarian crisis. He reaffirmed the inalienable rights of those refugees as confirmed by successive resolutions of the General Assembly, including the right of return, the right to their property and the right to compensation if they chose not to return. Settlement of the Palestinian refugee question based

on General Assembly resolution 194 (III) was an essential element in any just and permanent settlement.

41. The Agency must at least maintain its current level of services until a final and comprehensive solution was reached. He was concerned at the precarious financial situation described in the report of the Commissioner-General (A/54/13) and in the report of the Working Group on the Financing of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (A/54/477). The international community must provide sufficient resources to the Agency to enable it to maintain its programmes.

42. He once again stressed the distinction between Palestinian refugees and the services provided to them through UNRWA, on the one hand, and the rest of the Palestinian people and the support and assistance provided to them, on the other. The former was a shared responsibility of the international community until such time as an acceptable settlement was reached. His delegation therefore appealed to major donors, both countries and institutions, not to abandon the Palestinian refugees at such a delicate moment. Meeting the minimum needs of the refugees had a positive effect on their attitude towards the peace process. Any reduction in services would lessen their support for the peace process and leave them more susceptible to the voices of extremism and violence. He therefore reaffirmed his delegation's support for, and confidence in, the Agency and was confident that donors would continue to contribute to alleviating the suffering of those refugees until a settlement was reached and their rights were recognized.

43. He expressed dismay that the reports relevant to UNRWA had been made available to delegations only the previous day. His delegation found that situation unacceptable and requested the Chairman to investigate the reasons for such inordinate delays and to report his findings to the Committee.

44. **Mr. Al-Hosani** (United Arab Emirates) said that the systematic dispossession of the Palestinian people and expropriation of its homeland that had begun in 1948 with the massacres of Deir Yassin and Kafr Qasim and continued to the present day, pursuant to the Israeli Government's relentless implementation of its policy of occupation, expulsion, murder, and seizure of lands and goods, had placed a heavy responsibility on UNRWA. It had to provide humanitarian assistance, education, health and social services to the nearly 4 million registered Palestinian refugees scattered throughout Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic, the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Despite the continual rise in refugee population numbers, there was a perceptible quantitative and qualitative reduction in the level of humanitarian services provided by the Agency, due to the shortfall in the financial contributions and support provided by donor countries. The Agency was therefore severely restricted in its ability to raise standards of living among the refugees throughout the diaspora. It was essential that donor countries and international development agencies should continue to provide support of every kind in order to improve conditions for the Palestinian refugees and enable UNRWA to resolve its long-standing financial crisis. His country was optimistic that a just and lasting settlement would be found to the problem of the Palestinian refugees during the final stage of negotiations between the Palestinian and Israeli sides.

45. Such a solution must be based on Security Council and General Assembly resolutions, and, in particular, resolution 194 (III) concerning the return of the Palestinian refugees to their homes, and must respect the provisions of international law, the principle of land for peace and the Fourth Geneva Convention. In view of the central importance of the issue of the Palestinian refugees to the question of Palestine, it was essential for the United Nations to continue to champion that cause until such time as the refugees could return in dignity and security to their homes and establish an independent state on the land of Palestine, with Jerusalem as its capital.

The meeting rose at 5 p.m.